

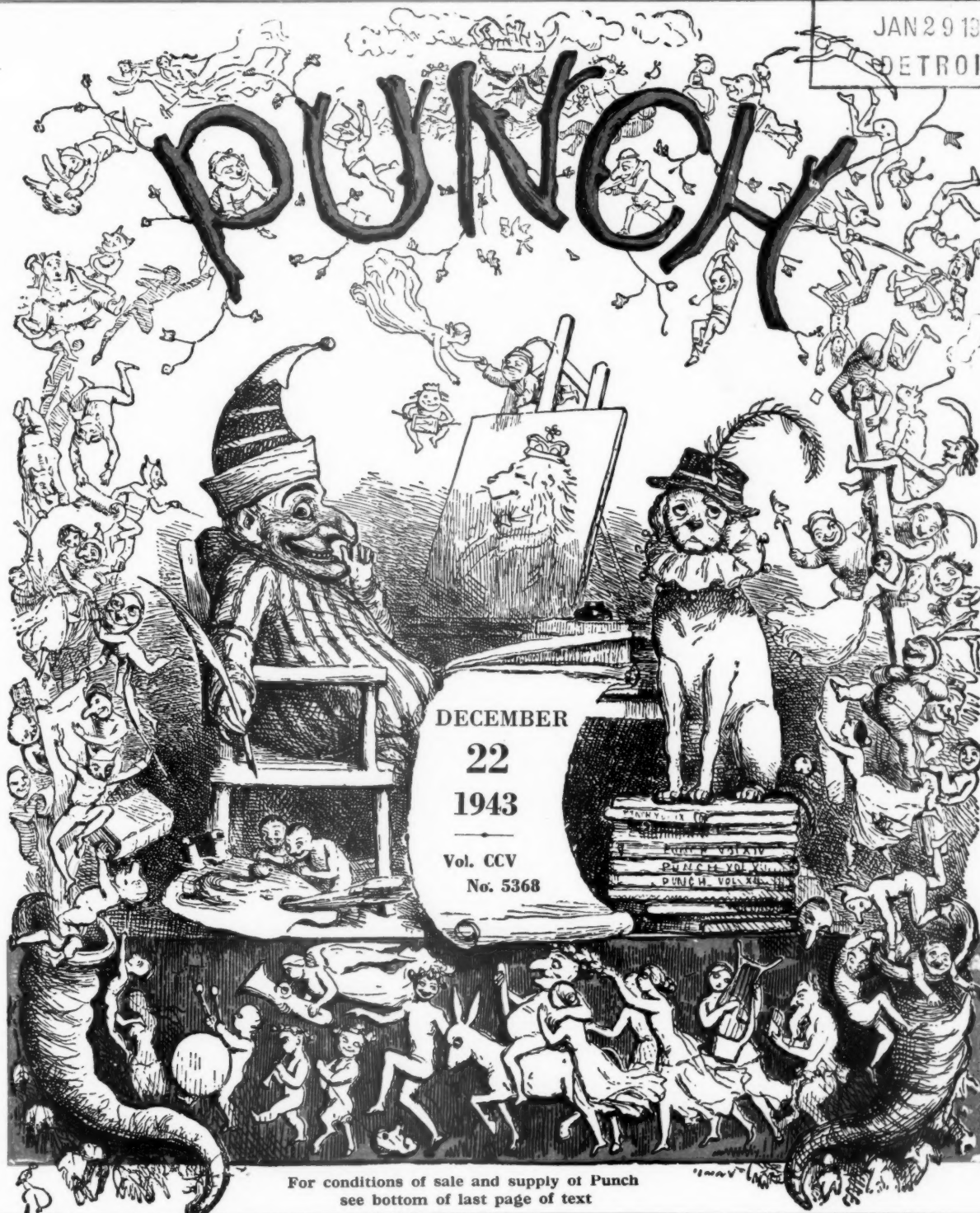
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JAN 29 1944

DETROIT



For conditions of sale and supply of Punch
 see bottom of last page of text



Imperial Typewriters

MADE IN
 GREAT BRITAIN



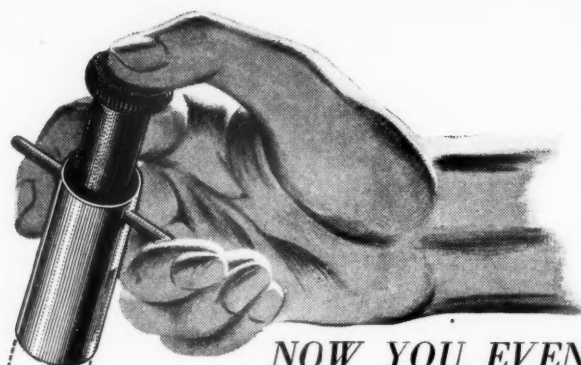
A wise man coming home with all his Christmas shopping!

He knows a thing or two. No Christmas present hunting for him. He solved that problem by deciding on Savings Stamp Gift Cards and Gift Tokens. A splendid idea for all busy folk, and what's more, they're gifts which are sure to be appreciated. A very suitable way of recognising Christmas this year . . . and something that will help to bring back the joy of old time Christmas.

MAKE THIS A *Savings Christmas*

Get beautifully coloured National Savings Stamp Gift Cards from your Savings Group, Post Office, Trustee Savings Bank or War Savings Centre. They are free to purchasers of Savings Stamps. You can stamp them with 6d., 2/6 and 5/- Stamps. In addition there are Gift Tokens sold in units of 15/- up to any amount. These can be exchanged for Savings Certificates or used to make a deposit in the Post Office or a Trustee Savings Bank.

Issued by the National Savings Committee



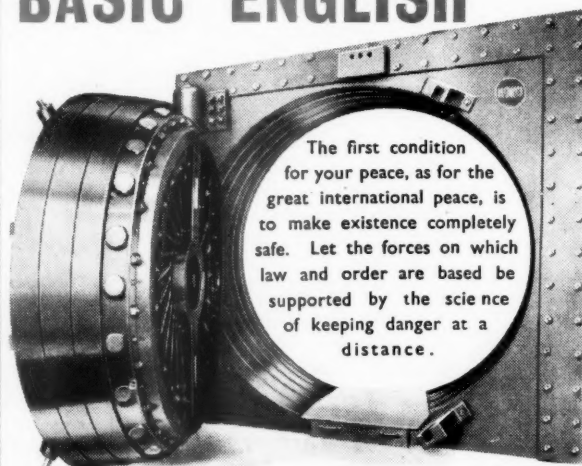
NOW YOU EVEN PLANT WITH A TUBE

★The "Fluora Seedasets" people have invented a useful little gadget that enables seedlings to be grown individually. They've done away with all that thinning out process and wastage of seed. We're not here to advertise this new gadget (although we don't mind passing on a good tip when we hear of one), our main object is to point out that our old friend the steel tube is the basis of this invention. Maybe by continually pointing out the universal usefulness of steel tubes we may plant a seed or two ourselves among manufacturers with fertile minds.

★ If you want a green thumb, don't write us—Write: Fluora Seedasets, Merrileas, Grove Lane, Chalfont St. Peter, Bucks

An advertisement for
BRITANNIA TUBE CO. LTD
Glover St. Birmingham
BY TUBE INVESTMENTS LTD

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We give the text above in Basic English to encourage the study of this proposed universal language.

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BANKERS' ENGINEERS

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STATE EXPRESS 555
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RAIL TRANSPORT is "Half the Battle"



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have run
**200,000 SPECIAL
TRAINS** for the
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BRITISH
GWR · LMS



RAILWAYS
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Carry the War Load

Cut out this Xmas fare!

This does not refer to turkey (if you can get it), or Christmas pudding (if you can make it), but to fares for travelling. The railways are heavily burdened with war traffic which must come first. To stay put is the sensible thing to do.

What do I do...?

I make up my mind not to travel this Christmas unless it is absolutely imperative.

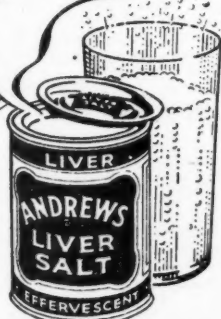
I keep in mind that passenger accommodation will be strictly limited, and if I am left behind or uncomfortable on my journey I remember that I have been warned.

I remember too, that less travel this Christmas may be a step towards Victory by next Christmas.

Issued by the Ministry of Information

Space presented to the Nation by
the Brewers' Society

To
keep fit
INNER
CLEANLINESS
comes first



When days are cold many prefer
Andrews with the chill off

ANDREWS

Family size tin 2/- including purchase tax
Guaranteed to contain 8 ozs.

41-12*

WHAT KIND OF A SPRING IS THIS?

Telling may be careless talk,
but it's safe to say that those
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STEAD. That springs from
a reputation made over 40
years and knowledge born
of experience. Send your
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He's
stepping
out this
year



A long way to go, but it's the early years that count. Wise mothers choose CHILPRUFE because of its famed Protection and Durability. The parents of today are the Children who wore CHILPRUFE a generation past. The tradition of CHILPRUFE goes on. It is always the best underwear procurable.

This tradition has also been extended to the Utility Underwear which we are now making.

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**INFANTS AND YOUNG
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for a century*

John E. Fells & Sons Ltd., London, S.E.1

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to do
with paint?**

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The ROBBIALAC COMPANY

Proprietors: JENSON & NICHOLSON LTD., LONDON, E. 15

What is wrong with this picture?



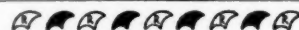
There are no prizes to be won for discovering the number of mistakes made here. With our artist going completely "off the rails" we just can't be absolutely sure ourselves! So, Caley's, makers of fine chocolate, offer you this diversion with the Compliments of the Season.

CALEY

SPA TREATMENT FOR RHEUMATISM

Spa treatment for Rheumatism has been recognised for many years as one of the most satisfactory methods of combating this insidious disease. Even a mild attack means pain and reduced working capacity, and you should act *at once*, before Rheumatism gets a stranglehold on your system. To-day, a course of treatment at a Spa is out of the question for most people, as neither time nor money can be spared. 'Alkia' Saltrates, however, may be described as a Spa treatment in your own home. It has the essential medicinal properties of seven world-famous Spas and similar beneficial effects as a course of drinking the Spa waters. A teaspoonful of 'Alkia' Saltrates in warm water before breakfast each morning will soon relieve the pain, and, taken regularly, dissolves impurities in the blood stream and eliminates them from the system, thus helping to prevent regular attacks of Rheumatism. A bottle of 'Alkia' Saltrates costs 3/9d., including Purchase Tax. Get a bottle to-day from your chemist and begin your Spa treatment to-morrow morning.

'ALKIA' SALTRATES



RADIO RENTALS

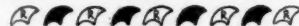
Unparalleled

war-time

SERVICE

SORRY! Owing to restricted supplies only a few sets are available in certain Provincial Towns. Enquire at Local Branch. Over 80 Branches and Depots operating to ensure Free Service, Free Replacements, etc., to the fortunate half million who rely on Radio Rentals for their listening.

Head Office: 92 Regent St., London, W.1



For your Silverware
use only

"Goddard's"

Plate Powder
or
Liquid Plate Polish

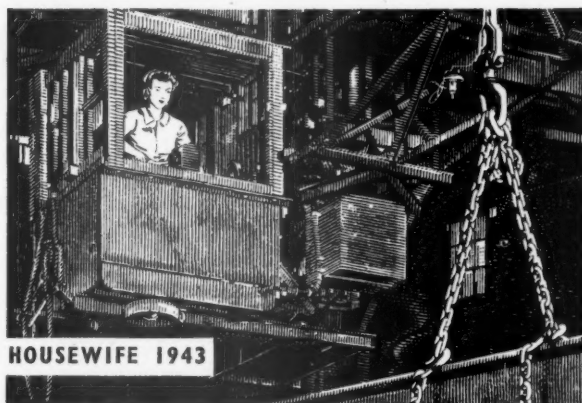
BOTTLED VINEGAR is best



SARSON'S

SARSON'S VIRGIN VINEGAR

and this is the BEST BOTTLED VINEGAR



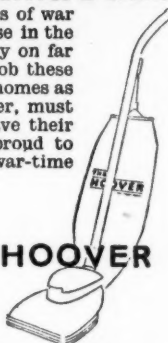
HOUSEWIFE 1943

The Hand that held the Hoover drives a Crane!

Not many of our housewives are doing jobs of war work like this! The great majority of those in the factories and workshops are plugging away on far less spectacular tasks. But whatever the job these "Housewives 1943" stick it, and run their homes as well! Many of them, low more than ever, must bless the day they bought a Hoover to save their sorely needed time and energy! We're proud to have helped them do a "double job" in war-time and in admiration say—

Salute! FROM HOOVER

Hoover users know best what improvements they would like in the post-war Hoover. Suggestions are welcome.



BY APPOINTMENT TO H.M. KING GEORGE VI AND H.M. QUEEN MARY
HOOVER LIMITED, PERIVALE, GREENFORD MIDDLESEX

EAT

HōVIS

and do

with a

slice

less!

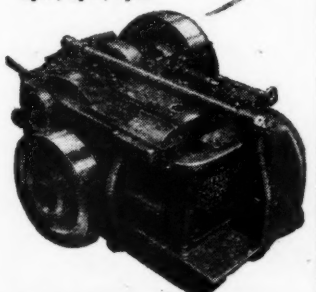
BEST BAKERS BAKE IT Macclesfield

Bumping 'em off!

FAST PRODUCTION OF MACHINE-MADE FORGINGS WITH THE "GREENBAT"

The "Greenbat" Hot Forging Machine will turn out smooth, well-finished forgings, needing a minimum of machining allowance, and it will perform at a high rate. It shows considerable production economies, tools are simple, inexpensive and can be changed quickly.

The size range of "Greenbat" Hot Forging Machines in bar capacity is:—2 in., 1 in., 1½ in., 2 in., 2½ in., 3½ in., 4½ in.



GREENBAT

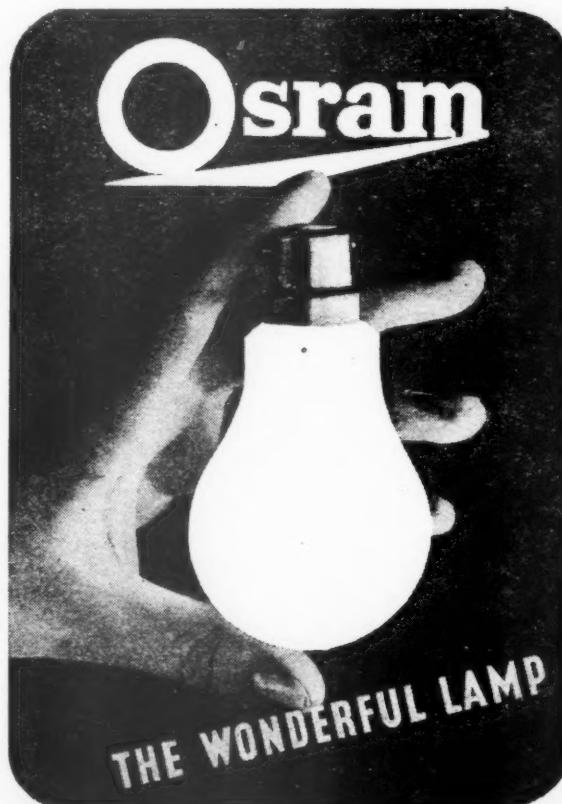
HOT FORGING MACHINES

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ML 5


Osram



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A **G.E.C.** Product MADE IN ENGLAND

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Makers
of fine Sauces,
Fish and Meat
Pastes
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Proprietors and
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JOHN
BURGESS
& SON LTD.
ESTABLISHED
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Romance and glamour may seem, these days, a trifle overshadowed, but be assured their sweet dictatorship will sway men's hearts until the end of time just as, with less of mystery, the charm of Minton China will influence those who recognise the truly fine and beautiful.

MINTON

The World's Most Beautiful China

MINTONS LTD STOKES-UPON-TRENT EST. 1793



We never go short of a meal, with plenty of home-grown vegetables and OXO to give body and flavour.



★ SEND TODAY for 'Rationtime Recipes,' the new OXO cookery booklet, enclosing one penny stamp.

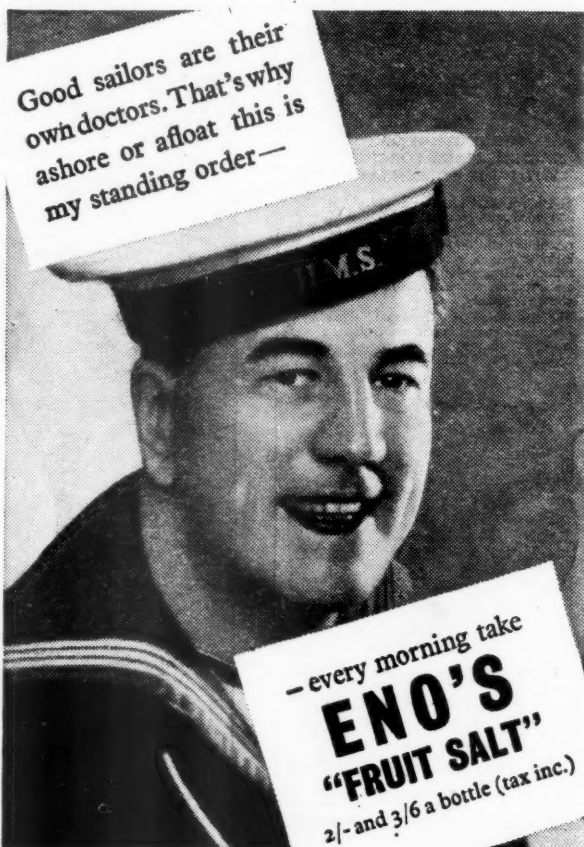
Dept. 5 · OXO LIMITED · THAMES HOUSE · LONDON E.C.4



Housewives engaged on war work find 'Mansion'—the quick and brilliant polish for Floors, Furniture and Linoleum—the easiest way to keep their homes bright, clean and healthy.

SUPPLIES ARE LIMITED and your Dealer may be out of stock. When you get your tin **USE IT VERY SPARINGLY.**

MP/QZ





PUNCH

or

The London Charivari



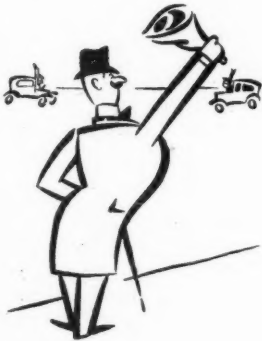
Vol. CCV No. 5368

December 22 1943

Charivaria

GERMAN writers predict that the Second Front on the West will be launched by Britain on a Monday. Apparently they have heard of our Mr. H. H. Martin.

A Brazilian soprano sang a solo in a lion's cage. The well-trained animal is said to have concluded the performance by putting its head in her mouth.



A business man recalls the time when he did not know what to do with his salvage. That must have been several razor-blades ago.

A man left a leg of mutton in a taxi. He is to be asked how he obtained it. Other people signal vainly from the kerb for one.

According to news reports there aren't enough plumbers to go round. There were enough to go round before the war, but they just didn't seem to.

"Do you ever sit in a railway carriage," asks a woman writer in an evening paper, "and hear the wheels humming a well-known melody?" The first eight words seem to be a sufficient question in themselves.

Tough

"SALE, 70-year old Hens; R.I.R x B.L."
Advt. in Westmorland paper.

The recent assertion by a statistical expert that Germany has only enough oil to last until June 1944 reminds us that during the last two or three years she has had to make do with the supplies she didn't have to last until the end of 1940 in 1939.

A boy aged ten who was brought before a magistrate recently was stated to have been found by the police with £75 in his possession. The youngster had probably been disposing of one or two of his old toys.

"Slow but certain progress has been made in fighting the prevailing epidemic," says a writer. It is already reported that many people have had forty-seven-hour flu.

Impending Apology

"'THANK YOUR LUCKY STARS'
There are no new British films this week."—*The Times*.

A North London baby is taken out in a wheel-barrow. At the first sign of rain the occupant puts up the hood.



Germany doesn't seem to be making any new friends. Aren't there *any* more countries she wants to attack?

There is a strong feeling among many of the more cautious members of the community that this year's Christmas cards shouldn't have shown any snow unless it was over the Straits of Dover.

We read of a youth who can write with both hands and feet simultaneously. Nature obviously intended him to become a farmer.

A London taxi-driver was thought to have lost his memory the other day. At any rate he drew up at a cab rank.

Kissing in public is forbidden in Italy except at railway stations. So when in Rome don't do as the Romeos do.



Not Very Kindly

"O H, oh," he cried, sat down on my sofa and put his head in his hands.
I switched on the two upper branches of the Yule log and waited.

"Have you seen what Basket wrote about my new book in *The Trumpeter*?"

"Of course I have," I said. "I thought it was characteristic, but rather rude."

"Rude! Can't you see that I've got to do something about it at once? What would you do yourself?"

"I should go up to Basket and say with a frank and manly smile, 'Basket, it is Christmas Eve, let us be reconciled. Drink with me Basket!' Wouldn't that embarrass the fellow a good deal?"

"It's not enough. I must write something about him in *The Counterblast*. Can't you write me a rough draft?"

"Give me about twenty-five minutes—if you don't mind verse, and a rather antiquated style. Read the papers and drink rum, if the women have left any in the bottle. As a rule they don't."

There was calm.

"How would this do?" I said. "Of course it needs a lot of polishing, and better antitheses. I've called it 'Lines on a Hostile Critic.' You wouldn't want to mention his name, I suppose."

"Read."

I began:

"His task it is to lead the herd astray
And teach the doubtful public where to bray,
No better guide than he, in whom are knit
A boor's behaviour and a maltworm's wit.
Of ancient books he knows but half a score
And turns their well-thumbed pages o'er and o'er
To find some borrowed lightning for the head
Of the last author whom he has not read.
Reflection's arduous aid he leaves alone
Save in the mirror where he sees his own,
Yet taste he has: likes dogs and ale and cheese,
And when he wants for wisdom prates of these.
So the poor mob that came to learn of books
Hears how a pointer points, or scullion cooks.
Yet lacks he not the loud Shakespearean line
To gain the plaudits of the asinine,
Ribbons of aged plays and Gallic tags
To hide the fustian of his mental rags.
These taking down at random from his shelf
He interlards with praises of himself,
And doubly proving all his labours vain
Astounds the idiot, and insults the sane——"

"Isn't it rather strong?"

"Strong!" I said indignantly. "Two hundred years ago, that would be a mild reprimand. A rap over the knuckles. The beginning of a ripple on a quiet pool. Between Dobson and Hobson, let us say. You are Hobson. What does Dobson do? There's nothing in the lines really. Each of them might have written them about the other, just as you might have written them about me, or I about you. But they suggest an atmosphere of hostility. After a few days Dobson replies with an epigram."

'OF MR. H——

He dipped the pen, of which he owed the cost,
In viper's poison, but the nib was crossed."

"Nib should be neb."

"Never mind. The argument is that Hobson is badly in debt, has lost his temper, plagiarizes, uses rotten writing materials and doesn't know how to write. Hobson now begins to show a trace of pique. He writes:

'TO MR. D——

The nib, though crossed, could splatter on the page
Enough to drown a midge, not worth my rage."

He wouldn't say 'midge' of course. I've bowdlerized that word. Dobson would be knocked back for a while. But not for a long while. Recovering he would say:

'OF MR. H——

The midge that hoped to bleed poor Hobson white
Found him on tasting too diseased to bite."

I'm afraid the language has become progressively modernized, but that is the general idea. Hobson would now have a difficulty in keeping the discussion within the bounds of good taste or even of the facts of insect life, but it would so happen, and very fortunately, that Dobson was taken by a fit of apoplexy or an ague, and died, and Hobson (that is to say, you) would content himself with a dignified epitaph like this:

'OF THE LATE MR. D——

The insults that were heaped on Dobson's hearse
Harm not his memory. His sins were worse."

Then he could settle down to his great ode on the Spirit of Harmony and Universal Goodwill. But it's not the manner of this century at all."

"What is the manner of this century?"

"We are far more interested in psychology, which means hitting below the belt. What you ought to do is to remember who is Basket's most important rival. Let us say it is Barrel. Write then a tremendous appreciation of Barrel for *The Counterblast*. Make it really fulsome. Go down on your knees to Barrel. How could anything annoy Basket more, since it is the one thing that he dares not do himself? It is quite likely that if you did that Basket would come round and kill you, and I have always thought that this would be a very good kind of case for Scotland Yard. What is the motive? No one can say. If anyone has been wronged it is you. The police would be entirely baffled in the absence of the customary clues. Won't you do that, please?"

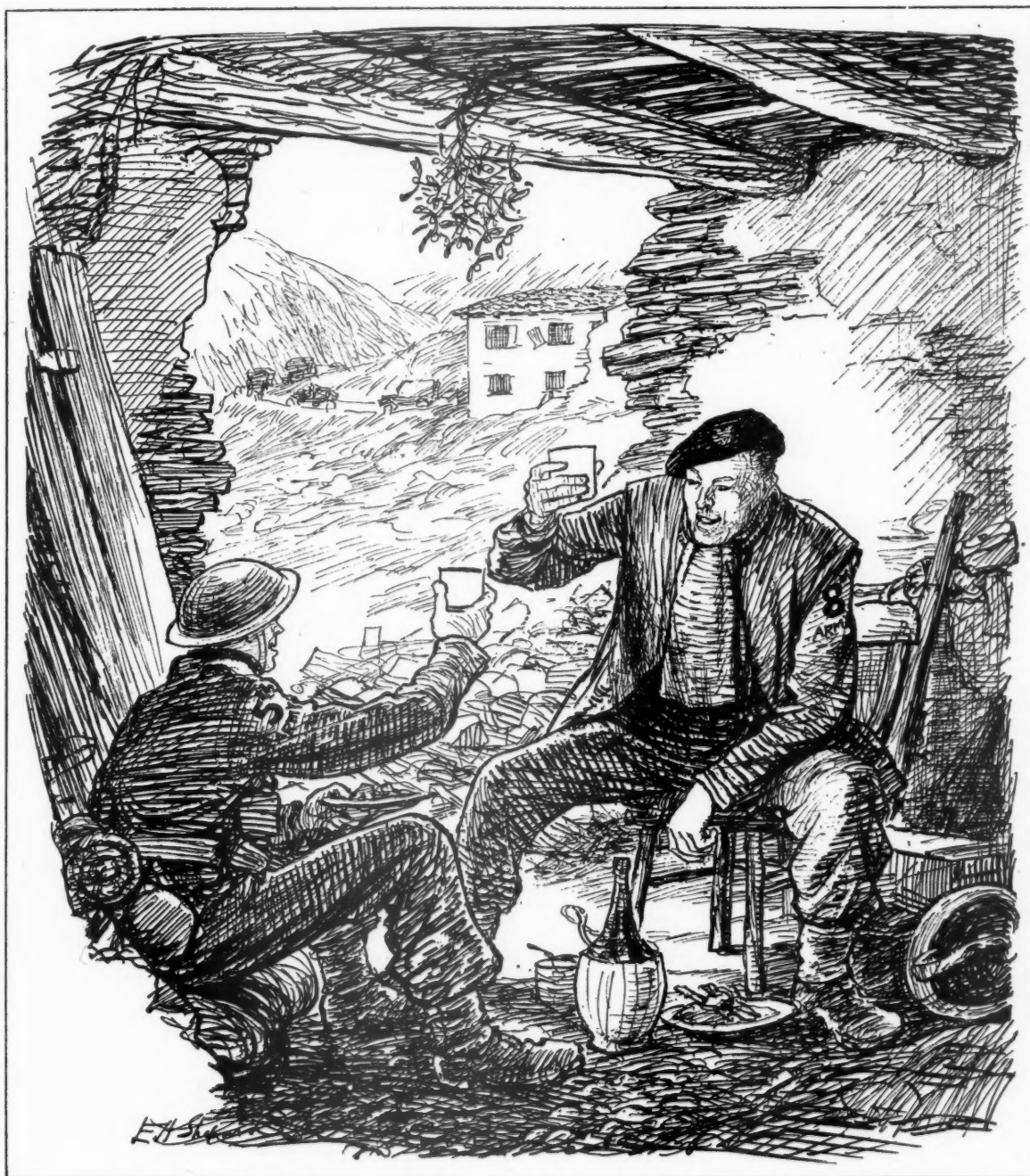
"But I don't want Basket to kill me."

"Always self, self. No one seems to have any idea of sacrifice for art's sake. Why not do as I said at the beginning? Send Basket a Christmas card with a robin on it. A Christmas card if possible with two robins on it, touching each other's beaks, and a few simple Victorian lines:

'Never a Christmas passes,
Never an old year ends,
But a vile man makes a squabble
And a good man makes amends."

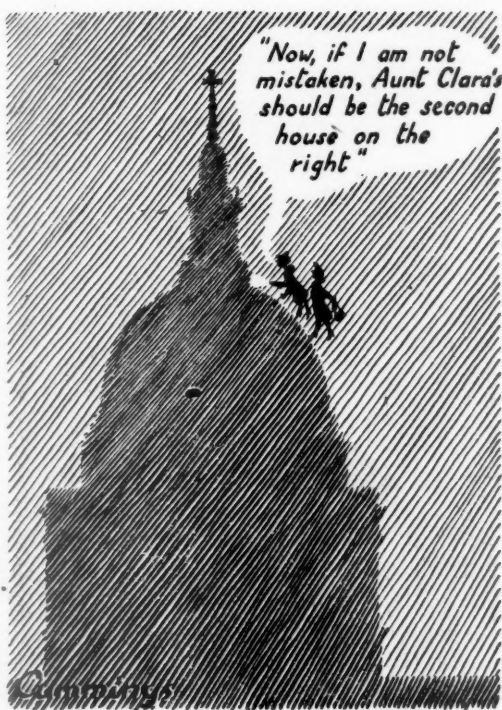
It will show how trifling you think your petty quarrel seems against the awful background of Armageddon. And it will only cost you fivepence if you don't gum down the envelope."

I thought he seemed a little more cheerful when he went away.
EVOE.



WINTERING ABROAD

"Through rivers and minefields, from Tunis to Rome
Be it never so humble, there's no place like home."



The Phoney Phleet

XXXIII—H.M.S. "Palooka"

THE countenance of Captain Blake
Displayed ferocity and spleen;
A sempiternal stomach-ache
Appeared to influence his mien.
That was *one* side of him; behind
The tiger-mask the man was kind.

Orphaned when only forty-three,
Single, his face pre-empting pals,
His wealth of loving sympathy
Was lavished upon animals
And, naturally, more on those
Which, like himself, looked bellicose.

Accordingly he'd bring aboard
A puma, say, or buffalo.
In every case the creature gnawed
Through rather too much matelot
And had to be, well . . . sort of die.
Then Blake would have another try.

But each successive beast of prey
Would chew its *Homo sapiens*;
The best he managed in this way
Was one that specialized in Wrens,
Yet even this was ill-received
And Blake was once again bereaved.

He'd tried out bison and wild cats,
Rogue-elephants, rhinoceri,
Six kinds of haggis, vampire-bats,
The fiercer breeds of platypi;
Now, mammals having failed him, Blake
Went out and bought a rattlesnake.

After a visit to the vet
To button up its poison-glands
He found he'd got the perfect pet
Beloved by officers and hands
And one that quickly proved to be
Ideally suited to the sea.

For instance, if a hawser went—
And hawsers are inclined to go—
The serpent, "Loopy," could be bent
To make a breast-rope or a tow;
Or, fully coiled and lying flat
It formed a serviceable mat.

A wireless aerial might break
Or, say, an anchor-cable snap:
How helpful then to have a snake
That firmly bridged the water-gap
By holding both ends in its grasp!
No wonder Blake adored this asp!

Respectful, too, and nicely bred
The modest reptile knew its place.
For instance, when it went to bed
It used the minimum of space
In which the job could well be done—
I.e., the barrel of a gun.

The bloom of love and happiness
Burgeon(ed) (yes, *burgeoned*) on Blake's dial;
And all was well in H.M.S.
Palooka for a longish while.
Then came catastrophe or worse
(As witness the concluding verse).

A bald narration of her blitz
Sounds like a triumph. It was not.
It's true *Palooka* met a Fritz;
It's true she fired one single shot;
It's true that shot destroyed the Hun;
But *Loopy* was inside the gun.

o o

Books

BOOKS, it has been said, furnish a room. I am making this my opening sentence not because it is particularly true or untrue—I mean, it would all depend on the size of the room, the number of books, and so on—but because it strikes the right note. What I want to tell my readers about is not so much the literary aspect of books as their appearance, habits, character, significance and relation to the people they have to deal with.

First, then, for their appearance. Books may be almost any colour, and psychologists have often wondered if the colour of books has much effect on human nature, but have not been able to find out much more than that dark-blue books are rather apt to be old-established, red books show up more, and pale-coloured books are likely to be considered flippant from a distance. What psychologists

FROM ISOLATED POSTS

FROM a letter received: "I write to express the great gratitude of the men and of ourselves. It has been such a pleasure to take round these woollies and see the delight of the men and hear the next day that they'd been really warm the night before. These men have a very hard time and have to stand-to in all weathers with very little protection. The gifts provided by your Fund have made a very real difference to them." Please join in the service by sending your contribution. Donations will be gratefully received and acknowledged by Mr. Punch at PUNCH COMFORTS FUND, 10 Bouverie St., London, E.C.4.

think rather interesting, though, is the fact that all books, when lumped together in book-shelves, look the same whatever their colour; that is, they all look like different coloured books rather than books in different colours. Another interesting fact about the appearance of books is that they are quite often coloured to match along the top edges of the pages. This is interesting because human nature is not sure if it is done to show the public which way up the book goes, or to hide the dust, and also because human nature, in its inmost heart, never fails to be impressed by publishers' cleverness in colouring the edge, or thickness, of a page without getting the colour on to the page itself. Yet another thing about books which impresses human nature is the undeniable fact that one page by itself has no thickness, while three hundred pages pressed together have. One way and another, then, books have a pretty good hold over the public and will always remain an insoluble mystery, even when the back of one comes off and the public can see that it is no more than gum and old newspaper; this, indeed, the public finds the most interesting fact of all.

The title of a book is either printed straight on to the back or on a label, and a book with a label has the distinction of looking very clean indeed until its owner notices how dirty it is. Providence has allowed for this by putting a spare label at the end of the book where, as likely as not, it will never be found; but anyone finding one and, after scraping part of the old label off with half a pair of scissors, managing to stick the new label on so that none of the old label shows, experiences the biggest thrill allotted to book-owners: the satisfaction of having bound and printed the whole book, if not written it. Psychologists are not, however, so interested in this as you might think, because they say it is just what they have come to expect of human nature. They are more interested in the relation between book-owners and book-jackets, pointing out that book-owners start by being unconsciously grateful to book-jackets as showing the rest of the world, from several yards' distance, how new the book is, and end by being consciously ungrateful when, after the book has been a week in its book-shelf, they realize that their instincts are right and they must throw the book-jacket away. No one has ever thrown a book-jacket away without feeling a literary vandal, and psychologists consider this a very hopeful sign.

Books, as I have hinted, are kept in book-shelves. There is a certain amount of accumulated convention in how they are arranged, with a strong tendency to having the smallest books in the top shelf, working down to the real hand-dingers at floor level. Psychologists consider this a hopeful sign too, this time of human nature's innate artistry, but add that it may have something to do with

the way book-shelves tend to have wider spaces between as they get lower. However that may be, it makes it a fairly safe bet that anyone getting down to floor level in a book-shelf is either out for improvement or looking for something to put on something which has just been glued together. Psychologists point out here that there has been a lot of woolly thinking about heavy books, and that it is time we faced up to the truth that books which are heavy and nothing else must expect to be used as heavy and nothing else, and that people using them thus to glue things together need feel no more than what they actually do feel—a faint literary smugness superimposed on pleasure in a job well done.

The maintenance of books is on the whole a fairly simple matter, amounting to no more than dusting them and keeping them from being borrowed. Most books are dusted by being pushed to the back of the shelf while the front is dusted, and then being pulled forward into place, the last bit being the difficulty. Anyone who dusts books properly, by taking them out and putting them back, runs the risk of getting caught up in a hitherto uninteresting book and being compelled to read the end half backwards, and this takes too much time to happen often. As for borrowing, a lot has been said and written about book-borrowing, but not enough, I think, about a very strong factor without which the situation would hardly exist. This is the extraordinary, almost fanatical, compulsion which comes over people who have read a certain book to insist that someone who has not read it shall read it at once. It is only natural that if the person who has read the book and the person who has not are both standing within reach of the book-shelves, the person who has read the book should actually take the book from the book-shelves and—to such lengths does fanaticism carry human nature—actually put it in the hands of the person who has not read it and—to such lengths does fanaticism drive human nature—not in the least want to either; and it is still more natural that anyone walking out of a house with an unwanted book feels dimly that the book was a present and that it would be a kindness to keep it.



"Now, what the Platoon could do with is a lance-corporal of Kitchener's type."

At the Pictures

SENTIMENT AND VARIETY

As you read these words the town will no doubt be full of, or at least just ready to welcome, a number of Stupendous Attractions for Christmas Week; as I write them the choice, though wide, does not offer anything very distinguished.

We may as well begin with *Claudia* (Director: EDMUND GOULDING), an example of that kind of sentimental story in which the characters (after the emotional atmosphere has been suitably worked up) throw off philosophical generalizations about Life, using the name of the person addressed after nearly every phrase and (what I have before had occasion to remark on) the spoken or implied words "You see." "You see, David, when—" "You see, Claudia, when—"... Obviously the effect so attained must be popular, for such pictures are numerous and in all of them (as well as in innumerable scenes in pictures of other kinds) it is precisely repeated. It is not one that appeals to me, and if there were not excellent playing in this film there would be no point in paying it much attention. But the principals here (DOROTHY MCGUIRE, ROBERT YOUNG and INA CLAIRE) are extremely good.

Basically the piece is a photographed play and there is little in it for the eye, but the competence of the acting often makes one forget this. Miss MCGUIRE, whose face (it may be the make-up people's responsibility) at times presents for a few seconds a disconcerting look of "Charlie McCarthy," makes her film debut here in a part she has long played on the stage and one to which perhaps she is ideally suited; certainly it could hardly be done better. The story is of what some of the newspapers used to call a "girl-wife" (perhaps even what one or two of them used to call in headlines "WIFE, 17") who suddenly grows up as a result of discovering within a few hours that she is going to have a baby

and that her mother, on whom she has been abnormally dependent, is dying. These serious matters turn up towards the end; most of the picture is devoted to exemplifying the whimsical girlishness of *Claudia*, which might easily be

though, in spite of the objections at which I have hinted, I found the film diverting enough. Skilful acting can do a great deal.

Thank Your Lucky Stars (Director:

DAVID BUTLER) has all the charm of a variety entertainment, full of famous names, that lasts for two hours—a description that applies just as much whether the thing appeals to you or not. One point in which this variety entertainment differs from similar ones like *Stage Door Canteen* lies in the fact that pains have apparently been taken to get nearly all the stars concerned to perform as much out of their usual character as possible: thus BETTE DAVIS sings or half-sings "They're Either Too Young or Too Old," ALAN HALE and JACK CARSON have a skittish song-and-dance straw-hat-and-stick duet, OLIVIA DE HAVILLAND, IDA LUPINO and GEORGE TOBIAS do a raucous "hot number," and so on. Even HUMPHREY BOGART, though he has no particular turn in the show, is given a scene in which he allows himself to be brow-

beaten by the normally mild and puffing S. Z. SAKALL. But EDDIE CANTOR, who has two parts, plays them both in the Cantor manner. Naturally the picture makes a confused and miscellaneous impression, but there are several good things in it.

The North Star (Director: LEWIS MILESTONE), also has some good things, but as a whole it struck me as a remarkable waste of talent. The objection comes down to this: Why make in America, with well-known American faces and accents, a film about Russia at war which the Russians are perfectly capable themselves of making with far greater verisimilitude? One reason perhaps is, for instance, to try to bring home to audiences of limited imagination precisely what "scorched earth" means in terms of burning one's own village, one's own house, by showing somebody like ANN HARDING in the act instead of an unfamiliar Russian woman; but I don't think such motives really justify the result.

R. M.



J.H. DOWD

[Claudia

INSTRUCTION IN THE FACTS OF LIFE

Claudia DOROTHY MCGUIRE
David ROBERT YOUNG

very tiresome in the hands of a less capable, charming and experienced player than Miss MCGUIRE. As it is,



J.H. DOWD

[Thank Your Lucky Stars

A WINDOW WOO

Detachment

"WHAT sort of tent do I get?" I asked.

"A very large one," said Lieutenant Sympson. "An E.P.I.P., practically as big as a cathedral. You won't know yourself here after the cramped conditions at H.Q., where you have to share a tent with two other officers."

This was good news. I had been sent to take over the detachment at El Basooka from Sympson, the detachment consisting of one white sergeant and eighty Kugombas. It was evening when I arrived, and in the flickering light of the hurricane-lamp I thought that the inside of Sympson's tent looked a little crowded. I tripped over a monstrous object just inside the door.

"Native drum," said Sympson. "I've got six of them, and they are very difficult to get, so I don't let the men take them away. If they want to play them they come here and do it."

I took my eyes off the drums and pointed to a sort of bar which cut off about half the tent.

"What's that?" I said.

"Canteen," said Sympson, "we get beer once a week for the men and lemonade most nights, and as no canteen tent is provided I fixed up that bar. And as there is no N.A.A.F.I. for thirty miles I also sell cigarettes, tobacco, soap, envelopes, and a lot of other things. Rather neat, eh?"

"Very neat," I said with sinking heart, as my eyes became more used to the semi-darkness and other impedimenta revealed itself; "but what's that great pile of stuff in the far corner?"

"That's what you may call the Q.M. store," said Sympson—"boots and things waiting to go to H.Q. for exchange, and a few odd camp-kettles and so forth. I might have got a separate tent for it, but I sort of like to have it under my eye."

"And that other table over there," I said, "with all the boxes on it?"

"The office," said Sympson, "forms of various kinds, and records and carbon-paper and pins."

I glanced hopefully round to see where I was supposed to sleep. A very small portion of the tent was screened off by a spare tent-wall, and I strode over, expecting to find Sympson's camp-bed and usual accessories.

"I guess that'll surprise you," said Sympson with a chuckle. "You don't often see even a midget billiards-table in the desert, do you? I bought it from a fellow in Port Said. The men absolutely love it, and I often have to

put back the time of 'Lights Out' to let them finish a tournament."

I was about to ask him, sarcastically, where the Detachment Commander was supposed to sleep, when Kugombas began to pour into the tent like a locust-drift. The white sergeant, a small man with a hunted look in his eyes, hurried (apparently for safety) behind the bar and began selling lemonade and other things. Six men sat cross-legged behind the drums and started an informal concert, while another manipulated a gramophone which I had not hitherto observed.



"Here—psst—Mister—like to buy a nice gollivog or two on the quiet? Or a set o' doll's furniture? Kewpies? Toy trains? Bunnyrabbits? Cuddliedoggies? Pussinbootikins?"

"Let's take a couple of them on at billiards," said Sympson, "but look out for the darts. The dart-board is behind your head, and Bumbakali Konga is just taking aim. . . ."

When the place was clear, about ten o'clock, Sympson got into the truck to go back to H.Q.

"Somebody will help you put your bed up," he said. "You'll find you can squeeze it in nicely behind the bar if you don't mind it being a bit tilted. Or you can do as I did and sleep under the stars."

I slept under the stars.



"Four bars of 'Good King Wenceslas' for each house is all we can manage this year."

The Poet Under Orders,

"CAN you do some verses for Yuletide?"
 Asked the Editor. (I am not as a rule tied
 Speechlessly into knots by the exigencies of rhyme,
 But I nearly was that time.)
 "O.K., Ed.,"
 I said.

Before I plunge the impetuous pen-nib into the inspirational
 ink-receptacle
 Let me assure all purists, pedants and others inclined to
 be sceptical
 Re the merits of those wearing the New School Neckware,
 that if my metre's as wobbly as an amateur's
 It isn't because I'm allergic to anapests or don't know a
 thing about hexameters
 And can't tell a dactyl from a spondee,
 Or because I've a date with a blondee
 Named Sue I met in a queue at Looe—

TOMMY HANDLEY. I thought it was a clippie named
 Xanthippe

You met on a bus
 At Cēsophagus?

(The above interruption was due to a technical hitch
 And this is Stuart Hibberd apologizing for it. With
 which

We return you to 10 Bouverie Street.)

ED. In the name of Pete

What's all this to do with Christmas, you ass?

ME. Thanks for getting me out of an awkward impasse.

At this season of the year our thoughts naturally turn to
 that pleasant

And popular habit of salvage exchange, the Christmas
 present.

If the Battle of Waterloo— ("Oh, yeah?" from old
 Harrovian readers)

Then some of this war will be won in the lumber-rooms of
 The Cedars;

That egg-boiling thing from Aunt Peg, for instance—what fun
 To think it has put out of action even the hundredth part
 of a Hun!

Which reminds me—I'm expecting from two aged aunts
 now working as miners,
 A few nice Newcastle Nuts or Derby Shiners.

(Last year they sent me clinkers,
The stinkers.)

Talking of gifts—what better gift than a book?
(Failing of course a bicycle, a bottle of whisky or a cook.)
The Book Department? Certainly. Straight through
Past the "Utility," the "Austerity" and the "Make-do" ...
Have you read this, madam? Just come in—
The Positively Last Man to Leave Berlin.
What about a "Puffin" Extra for George and Janet?—
Pub Planning, Pudding Planning, Planning the Planet.
Oh, quite, madam; thrillers are still being read:
You can safely fall back on *Five Bodies in the Potting-Shed.*

Send your Greetings and Regards
On "Economy" Xmas cards.
Plain, pointed and pulpable!
Why buy others and feel culpable?
Everyone amused, none offended.
Sample wordings appended:

A Merry Christmas and the Best of Cheer;
Please Wish Yourselfs the Same From Us Next Year.

To Wish You the Good Old Wish and Joys Abundant
Three Christmases running would surely be redundant!

Bung-ho! Old Mate.
Xmas 1943-48.

Keep to the Strait and Shallow Bath! Fit Yours with an
EYE-SPYE.

The moment the water exceeds 5 inches the taps go dry
And bells are rung all over the house. The Perfect Gift
For the Guest-house hostess. The Bath-hog biffed!

By the way, are you dreaming of a wine Christmas,
A let's-go-places-and-dine Christmas,
A ride-on-the-railway-line Christmas?
Do you come all over funny
At the sight of unspent money?
Do you, in short, listen to that thug
The Squander Bug?

If so, *You Are Not Well*
And need ENESSEL.

The National Saving Elixir. Kills dead that wretched
craving

For fur coats, diamond necklaces, piano-accordions and
crazy paving.

Mrs. Thomas writes: *It acts like a magic wand,*
I went straight out and bought a Defence Bond.

Let's see—

What have we got for our Christmas tree?

5 hair-pins (pre-war,

Found in the spare-room draw'r),

2 razor blades, 6 sugars (lump),

1 inoperative bicycle pump,

8 buttons (assorted), some ribbon,

A photo of Uncle Tom with his bib on,

And a snap of Nana

Eating a banana

On Southend Pier. Yes, dear,

That's a banana; and that's what we call a pier.

And now for a spot of carol-singing

Just to set the Welkin, not to say the Kremlin, ringing:

Hitler's been caught on the bend,
The Fuehrer's been kicked in the Panzers,
That wily old prince of romanzers,
Goebbels, is at his wits' end.
Roll out the carol, Dnieper,
Hitler's been caught on the Bend.

Letter from a Quiet Village

DEAR MUM AND ALL,—This is a very quiet little village. Our Tank park is in the middle near the church and the school. The school is so small if you kick a ball hard it goes right through one window and out of the other. We are a quiet lot we start at seven getting the Tanks going, also the lorries, we do a lot of night driving in convoy, also by day we go out frequent, but the roads are so narrow we have to go very slow, especially the Ls, or you keep hitting things, the Ls do, it is difficult, the bridges are so small if you wobble you go right through and over. I wish there was a cinema, but it is too quiet a village for that! Only two pubs, and not enough beer to get drunk, except Dick, you know Dick, he would get drunk on a dessert island. Saturday we had a dance in the village hall, only two fights, it was a quiet dance, there was a siren in the middle, but no bombs at least not in the village, a wood caught fire and we had to go and put it out, there were three fire engines came through the village, we went in lorries. We are only two miles from Jim's aerodrome, the bombers come back about three in the morning, in the day they practice hedge-hopping. I have seen Jim twice. Sometimes they fly a target plane and the Ack-Ack fire at it. There are ranges a mile away but I have not been out yet, but some of us have. There are 300 of us here, we are in huts or billitted, I hope we move soon, I do not like such a quiet place. Cheerio for now BILL.

o o

"COMPLETE bookmaker's equipment, including bag, umbrella, clerk's book, etc. £35. Also single barrel 20-bore shot gun, ejects empty cartridges; in good condition with 180 Ely cartridges, £12 10."—Advt. in "Greyhound Express."

Settling down?



"... and the frost was croo-el ..."



"Look—mistletoe!"

Going, Going . . .

(It is reported from Africa that the price of a live donkey has fallen from sixpence to a penny.)

The Donkey speaks

I AM an ass, remote and unassuming.
Not as the horse, a thing of higher note;
Not mine to know the ecstasy of grooming,
Stable for rest and fortifying oat.

Foraged on husks, uncomfortably tethered,
Chilled in the cold and heated when it's hot,
Often, for no apparent reason, leathered—
Hardly, you'd think, an enviable lot.

Still on I drudged and in a humble manner
Nourished one thought to solace and redress,
Feeling that if men priced me at a tanner
I was worth that, and not a farthing less.

Yet of all hurts—and I have suffered many—
Hear now the last most devastating blow:
I have come down to one lone mangy penny;
This for a self-respecting donkey? No.

Cheap I may be, but is it well to ram it
Under my nose, with none to care a pin?
Bring out your poleaxe; fetch a rifle; Dammit,
Who'll bump me off? Will someone do me in?

* * * * *

Peace, little friend. Take up your daily collar.
Things at their worst are pretty sure to mend.
Good times will come; you'll yet be worth a dollar.
Up with those ears of yours. Peace, little friend.
DUM-DUM.



MORE HAPPY RETURNS

"Who would have fancied a few years ago that I should be getting all these lovely presents on my sixty-fourth birthday?"

Impressions of Parliament

Business Done

Tuesday, December 14th.—House of Commons: Mr. Eden Tells a Story of the (Middle) East.

Wednesday, December 15th.—House of Commons: It is Debated.

Thursday, December 16th.—House of Commons: Announcement of the P.M.'s Illness.

Friday, December 17th.—Both Houses: "That This House do Now Adjourn"—Agreed.

Tuesday, December 14th.—The House of Commons went all gay and dressy to-day. There was quite a Regency touch about the place.

Sir ASSHETON POWNALL, true-blue Tory that he is, doubtless felt that he could wear his waistcoat without fear of suspicion that it had political significance. So he did. It was a beauty—bright red, with buttons that shone like any peace-time Guardee's. Members shaded their eyes.

Then came Sir STANLEY REED, stately as usual in his correct morning dress. But . . . but . . . yes, it *was*! A waistcoat of surpassing beetrootiness adorned his middle, shone out like a good bargain in a couponless world, proclaimed that Sir STANLEY, like Sir ASSHETON, knew a good thing when he saw it and feared not to proclaim it.

Scarce had the shock of this mannequin parade died when Lady ASTOR stepped in, wearing on her dark dress what appeared to be a perfect specimen of the cabbage-lettuce but was, beyond question, something much more exotic.

Even this was not the end. Mrs. MAVIS TATE (always the model of Parliamentary elegance and correctitude) took her seat by Lady ASTOR's side, and it was then seen that she had added at the neck of her normal black some brilliants which shone gaily in the lights. This, one felt, really completed the picture, set the stage for the arrival of the best-dressed Minister.

But, no. The door of the Diplomatic Gallery opened and in stepped a figure in morning-dress of such surpassing splendour and perfection of cut that all other suits—even those of the other Diplomats—took on dinginess and bagginess in its presence. The occupant of the suit was Mr. FEODOR GUSEV, the Soviet Ambassador, who was paying his first full-scale—or full-dress—visit to the House.

Evidently on the well-established principle that it is useless to gild the lily, Mr. EDEN arrived in a smart but mundane suit of Parliamentary

"uniform," black coat and striped trousers.

And so the scene was laid for Mr. EDEN's statement on the Cairo and Teheran conferences, recently attended by him, together with Mr. CHURCHILL, Marshal STALIN, President ROOSEVELT, the Turkish President and many others.

Mr. EDEN apologized for the absence of Mr. CHURCHILL, explaining that he was otherwise engaged. He described himself (after Macbeth) as a poor player that struts and frets his hour upon the stage. Except that he did, indeed, speak for an hour, the quotation bore no resemblance to the facts.



BACK FROM PERSIA

Anthony E. Whittington: "My cat's in the bag, and I can't let it out just now."

Certainly it was not "told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing."

In fact it is doubtful whether any sixty-minutes' speech ever signified more—for the Axis Powers especially. In a month the wonders of modern aviation had made possible three conferences each of which would formerly have taken a full month. Even the Prime Minister had never worked so unremittingly before, said Mr. EDEN, but he was still stout of heart and confident of spirit.

The conferees of Teheran—Britain, U.S.A. and Russia—had reached complete agreement on the scope and timing of future military operations, he said, dealing a neat death-blow at the wall-daubing "Open a Second Front Now" fanatics. We should also

fight Japan to the bitter end, to take from her all her ill-gotten gains.

The talks in Teheran and Cairo would have the result of shortening the war and then of winning the peace. The enemy would try to split us after the war and thus win the peace, but we should defeat that by refusing to be divided. Turkey would help us later.

We should also find that France would regain her greatness, play her part in the new world. The underground movement in France was the real soul of France, and had Britain's full sympathy and confidence.

Yugoslavia and Greece were our political problem-children, but would, he hoped, be all right on the night. Then Mr. EDEN caused gasps of surprise from Members by revealing that one of their colleagues, Brigadier FITZROY MACLEAN, was at that moment with Marshal TITO, the Yugoslavian "Partisan" leader, in the interior of German-occupied Yugoslavia. He had established excellent relations with the Marshal, said Mr. EDEN blandly.

As for the campaign in Italy, it was going slowly, certainly not because of any want of initiative by our troops, but because of difficult terrain, still more difficult weather. But we should get there just the same. A hush fell as he gave details of the casualties so far suffered; the House noted with undisguised relief that, considering the heaviness of the fighting, they were mercifully low.

With a final warning that hard fighting, grim times, great battles were impending, calling for all our courage and determination, Mr. EDEN sat down.

Mr. ARTHUR GREENWOOD, newly from his sick-room, suffered his usual fate of getting up just as everybody rushed off to the dining-room, but the rushers also suffered their usual fate of missing as neat and cogent a contribution to the debate as could be imagined.

Mr. GREENWOOD ought really to be less modest and to give himself a better place in the Parliamentary playbill. His speeches certainly merit that, with their combination of shrewd common sense and happy directness of phrase. After that the debate rather tailed off.

Wednesday, December 15th.—To-day was the second day of the debate on the war and foreign policy, and there seemed to be only modified interest in it. The Benches were (to put it diplomatically) not overcrowded.

So far as the debate was concerned this did not matter much, but there



"I'm sorry to keep on giving you boar's head, dear, but it's the only thing I can get that isn't rationed."

was at Question-time a certain liveliness that had a charm all its own. Mr. SHEPARD, for instance, caused hearty laughter by advocating an Order to make it compulsory to seat four-a-side in first-class railway compartments. He did not make it clear whether he wanted the number *limited* to that figure, or *increased* to it, but Members seemed to have their own ideas. Mr. NOEL-BAKER, of the Ministry of War Transport, roused the nostalgic, wistful roars again by saying that some of the carriages would not seat more than three a side in reasonable comfort.

So well did this one go over that Mr. KEELING asked one about the number of passengers allowed to stand in an omnibus. Mr. NOEL-BAKER, sniggering in anticipation of the "corker" that was to come, replied that it varied according to the type of bus and the time of day, but shook his head (surprisingly) at Mr. WILL THORNE's suggestion that it also depended a little on the size of the people.

Rear-Admiral BEAMISH and Mr. ATTLEE exchanged pleasantries over the retention (or otherwise) after the war of a combined Defence Staff. Mr. ATTLEE made a reply to the Admiral's

question on the subject, which the Admiral smilingly described as "court-cous, if somewhat colourless." Mr. ATTLEE smiled in return—and supplied the needed colour by means of a rosy blush.

Then it was Mr. NOEL-BAKER's turn again, but they called for him in vain. He had gone, and someone suggested that: (a) he had been crowded out of (or into) a first-class railway carriage, or (b) had missed the bus. However, he turned up, smiling, panting and apologizing all at once.

Sir RICHARD ACLAND, Mr. W. J. BROWN and several others having made by-election platform speeches on the subject of the issue of the Writ for a by-election in Skipton, which, they said, was unfair, seeing as how Christmas comes but once a year and this time bang in the middle of the by-election (as at present arranged), the foreign affairs debate was resumed.

Most of the freshness had gone from the discussion, and Mr. ANEURIN BEVAN's attempt to give it new life with a long and involved account of his personal search for influence in public life (which, he unexpectedly confessed, had failed) did nothing to revivify it.

Mr. R. A. BUTLER, Minister of Education, was given a loud cheer for merely nodding his head. But the nod meant that the long-awaited Bill to improve our public education system was formally introduced.

Thursday, December 16th.—One or two Bills were tidied up to-day, but it looked as if the hearts (not to mention the bodies) of most Members were in the Highlands (or elsewhere) a huntin' the turkey. However, much work was promised for the New Year, and Members went home in good heart.

Mr. ATTLEE announced, to the shocked surprise and regret of the whole House, that Mr. CHURCHILL was ill, with pneumonia in the left lung. There were cheers when he expressed the wishes of the House for the Premier's speedy recovery. It is on these occasions that the House fully realizes how much it loves and admires "W. S. C."

Friday, December 17th.—Both Houses adjourned for the Christmas recess, and Members wished each other a Utility Christmas and—this very emphatically—a Happy and Victorious New Year. Sentiments which your scribe respectfully echoes to Mr. Punch and all his readers.



"Can you tell me where I can find my wife? She's Father Christmas."

News from the Suburbs

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I can now tell you I have been to sea again.

It seems only yesterday that I returned from overseas with a settled conviction that the sea was all very well for those who had not had the good fortune to be in the Army and that I was very much attached to being in the Army. And now, what do you find! A bare twelve months passes and I am pushing my way forward towards the dock-gates with the smell of the sea in my nostrils and

a small bottle of seasickness remedy in my pocket. You may well say that it doesn't make sense.

It was all on account of a certain Invasion Exercise. At the time it seemed a good idea not to miss it. It looked as though it might be something of an event. And I determined I would treat it as such. Something that should be recorded for history.

I resolved to take with me a little notebook and to keep an hour-to-hour account of history coming straight off the press.

And so I became, temporarily, one of the crew of a motor-torpedo-boat.

A torpedo-boat is not a bad place in which to live, whilst it is in harbour, that is. The sleeping compartment is excellent, provided you have no clothes beyond those you are wearing, no personal possessions, and a figure of not more than twenty-three inches round the waist. One can move freely in one direction or the other, that is, in or out, and if you have the flexibility of a snake it is quite possible to sleep. The food is plentiful and attractively served (although, to one who has lived on civilian rations for some time, the two are practically synonymous). And of course you can spend your waking hours on the quayside, or in the depot-ship mess.

Naturally, it is quite different at sea.

Not that getting to and from the ship is easy. By some maladjustment of the tides, one has always either to climb up a very slippery ladder or leap dangerously downwards on to a deck that is littered with lethal instruments of one type or another. Even if you know that the torpedo tube is empty, you have always a lurking fear that if you touch any part of it you will find yourself shot overboard by a strong blast of compressed air and be expected to remain submerged until you come smartly up against an enemy vessel or the dock wall.

After I had idled in harbour for some time, enjoying the traditional naval hospitality and a well-stocked bar, we sailed one night, just at sunset. The following day was to see the culmination of the whole programme. With any luck we should be able to look excitedly at Le Touquet, Ostende, Paris-Plage, or some of the other well-known casinos and golf-courses. Not only that. We were in the middle of the period of the year which experience had proved to be the most suitable for cross-Channel swimming. And we would not have to start right back at the French high-water mark. I sharpened my indelible pencil and wrote a nice little piece about the effect of the evening light on the barrage balloons.

It was a quiet night, for us. The A.A. gunners on our own side were busily at work. The A.A. gunners on the French side were also busily at work, but not in such comfortable circumstances. When the moon went down and I could feel convinced that we were really invisible, I found myself thinking that there is a great deal of satisfaction in listening to bombs going off on someone's else's gun positions.

Especially really big bombs, the kind you can feel miles out at sea.

I made another note. "11.30 P.M. Coffee served."

But however pleasant night may be, grim dawn will inevitably follow. About 4.30 A.M. there was a faint haze in the east, a suspicion of the approaching daylight that perhaps only the more deeply sensitive could pick out. I knew then that it was useless trying to get any more sleep. I had some soup instead. I made another note. "4.40 A.M. It will be dawn soon. What will the day bring? Ate piece of chocolate."

By this time we were moving smartly towards the point at which we were to pick up the rest of the invasion fleet spearhead. The light increased. The gun-crews reappeared in their places. Of the stars, Orion was the last to leave the sky, except the morning star towards which we were sailing. It was about time now to expect the first aircraft to arrive. I made another note. "6.5 A.M. Remember to wear a thicker shirt next time."

The next few hours were most exciting. I had never really believed that ships could find their way about the sea and all arrive at the same place

at the same time. But they did. Gunboats, launches, minesweepers and what have you, and finally columns of landing craft of one kind and another, all moving in regular formations and with that air of self-importance possessed by a Thames tug and its string of barges. "I may not look much, but I know where I am going and you won't stop me," sort of attitude.

Then the aircraft came. They were all ours. I made another note in my little book. "7.15 A.M. Ate breakfast of two large sandwiches. Could have eaten more."

I thought it was rather an historic moment. Out ahead, concealed in the morning haze, was France. All around us, on the surface, in the air and, for all I know, under the surface, were hundreds of British and American fighting units which had assembled in perfect order and were sailing without the slightest interruption. And just three years ago, if we had been where we were (which was impossible, since the craft did not exist), we should have

been Stukaed and shelled and torpedoed and generally had to swim back wearing a tin hat.

I made another note. "9.45 A.M. Had cup of tea. Navy tea is as strong as Army tea. I wonder why?"

It was a very nice day, once it had turned out the way it did. We put down smoke screens, investigated this section of the fleet and that, and finally made harbour in time for a substantial late lunch. I had learnt a number of valuable lessons.

One was that it is pretty useless to take a little notebook. In retrospect, the entries I made seem to lack dignity and elevated thinking. Even where they are legible.

Besides, emotion is best written about in tranquillity, afterwards, so the best poets have always said. I think they're right.

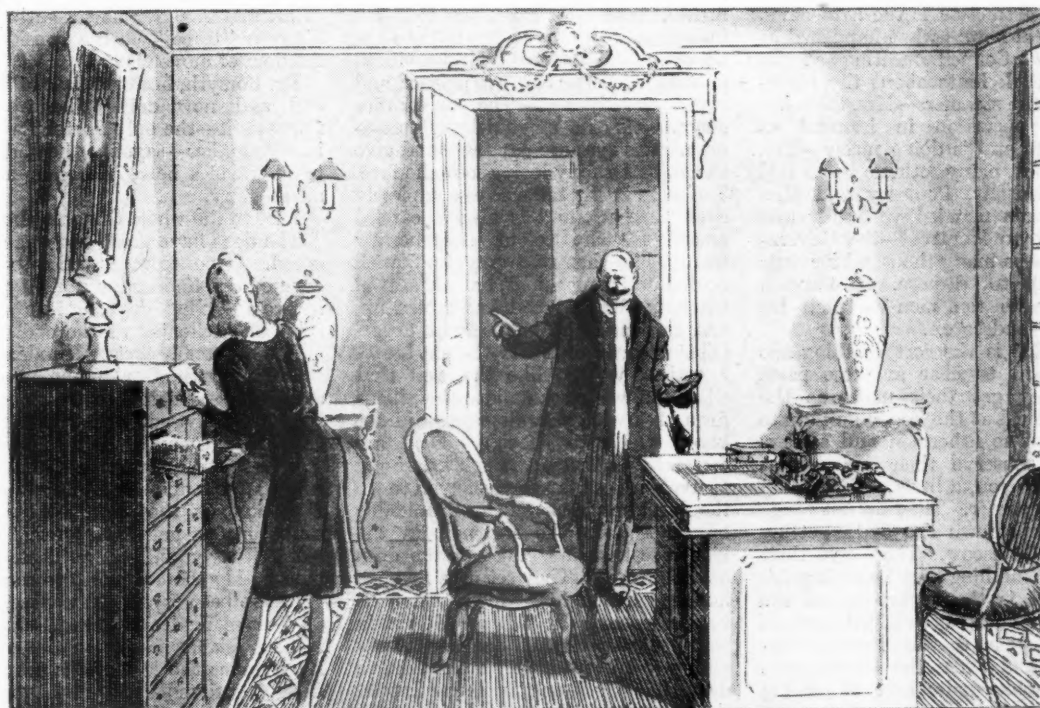
Your loving Son HAROLD.

Musical Manners

WHEN you go to a symphony concert

You'll set the highbrows scoffing
If you clap at the end of a movement
Instead of coughing.

The fact that goods made of raw materials in short supply owing to war conditions are advertised in this paper should not be taken as an indication that they are necessarily available for export.



"Don't waste any more time with those files, Miss Bromley—I want you to devote this morning to looking for some hair-grips for my wife."

English Islands or Lost Off Labrador

XII

STILL foggy. We huddle round the radio in Herb's cabin and check our watches by the pips and grunt at the good news. Our overseas news is well done, the American too. I enjoy, too, in the local (St. John's) wireless Mr. Gerald S. Doyle's programme. This was in the first place a "commercial" programme, advertising face-creams and patent medicines: and there is still some perfunctory show of that at the end—there is no "plugging." But the thing has now become a popular and important institution.

Dinner. Salt-cod again. The Pope may like it: but I do not. Still, we are lucky to have it. It is now blowing a gale from the south-west, raining fiercely and very cold. Dense fog all round. The barometer stands steady and obstinate at 30.4—between FAIR and VERY DRY. Nature has gone mad. The Captain frets in his wheel-house, muttering that he never knew anything like it in Labrador.

But about Mr. Gerald Doyle. His programme gives some attention to general news and the cosmic mess; but the main attraction is the *local* news. Really local news—what happened at the Town Council meeting at St. John's: dark hints about the movements of the steamers—Mrs. Sims has had her operation in hospital at Twillingate and is doing nicely—Mrs. Cooper and many others have had babies—and Mr. Pomeroy and Miss Pilgrim were married yesterday and have gone to Montreal—the Government have so many thousand herrings (for bait) to dispose of—Captain Watts wants ten men to man his schooner—and so on.

Now, this is the sort of thing the people want to hear in these parts where they get their mails as the snakes are fed at the Zoo, on alternate Fridays. The fishermen and settlers have to conserve their radios, not having, like you, a little wireless shop round the corner. They do not range idly up and down the dials, getting Rome and Moscow. They save their juice for something they know is good. The result is that everyone on the coast through at least eight degrees of latitude listens to Mr. Doyle's programme: and when the Government want to make quite sure of getting some piece of information known—a weather warning to the fishermen or an order to the lighthouse-keepers—they give it to Mr. Doyle. Not once or

twice in our rough island stories did squalid commerce gradually rise to respectability.

Mr. Doyle himself is a racy and congenial character who charges about the coast in his own boat, doing business, and knows everyone on the island. He gave us a bottle of rum at a critical time. I shall drink the last tot to his health to-night.

There is one member of the ship's company I have not mentioned, and that is the dog. The dog is an uncomely and, I hate to have to say it, unpleasant little male dog called "Venus". I know not why. Venus was acquired by Andy from the Montagnais Indians encamped at North West River. He does not like the sea, poor dog, and I think he has got worms: he may have anything.

He has a wolfish little face; but will not, I think, grow up to be a "husky", the real Labrador dog, which, according to Sir Wilfred Grenfell, is "a very slightly modified wolf". This is a remarkable animal and has some of the habits of a slightly modified wolf. "A good specimen stands two feet six inches, measures over six feet six inches from the tip of the nose to the tip of the tail and will scale a hundred pounds. . . . The ears are pointed and stand directly up. The appearance generally is of a magnificent Pomeranian. The eyes are Japanese and give the animal a foxy look about the face. The large bushy tail curves completely over the back and is always carried erect." "The colour is generally tawny, like that of a grey wolf, with no distinctive markings, but a beautiful black-and-white breed has grown up, and furnishes the handsomest dogs." (This is convenient; for the old breed, I gather, was so like the wolf that when the wolves came into the village for a chat with your dogs you did not know which to shoot.) They are certainly handsome; though I dare say I have not been far north enough to see the finest specimens of this formidable breed: and in the summer, in the bigger settlements, most of the dogs are penned up. They set up a fiendish howling at night, which, when it begins, is exactly like an Air Raid warning (red). When one howls they all howl. In winter they are needed to draw the sledges, or *komatiks*, and could not, in any case, be penned up because of the snow-drifts. They then, I gather, roam at large in gangs, and are a terror to the stranger. If you fall

down they eat you—or try to. I met an Englishwoman in St. John's who had seen a child very nearly eaten. She warned me to carry a stick. A Newfoundland girl who has worked in Labrador as a nurse for two years said she was still scared of them. I have met many of them prowling about the solitary shacks, but they have not yet attempted any modified wolfer. I do not carry a stick: but I am very careful not to fall down.

In the winter they do wonderful work. They draw the mails, the doctor, the parson over the frozen roads and bays of the sea, over the hills and through the forest. "There can be no question," says Sir Wilfred, "that the dogs love to be driven. They go perfectly wild with excitement when they are in harness. The komatik must be lashed to a stump or stone and the line cut only when the driver is ready to go. . . . The ideal team is a clever mother followed by a dozen of her own pups."

Nevertheless, the driver always has his gun ready, for at any moment the modified wolf may turn on his driver or his mates. Each dog, I gather, has his own "trace", so has considerable freedom of movement.

Dr. Forsyth, however, late of South-end and now doing fine work at Cartwright—the only doctor for seven hundred miles—says that he finds dog-team travel a bore, and reads a book all the way.

I leave the whole thing to the jury.

The dogs have great endurance and speed. One team is said to have covered one hundred and eighty miles in two and a half days, and showed no signs of slackening at the end.

The dog mail-service, I understand, comes under the Government: so these animals can claim to be the only modified wolves in the Civil Service. Or perhaps not.

Five-thirty. Supper. Good soup. And I have found some Vitamin A and D tablets on the shelf. Wind, due south; strong gale; rain; fog. Barometer slowly falling at last. So presumably there is worse to come.

I have been trying to imagine, from all I have read and heard, what life in Seal Islands is like in the winter. By October the last of the schooners from Newfoundland will have gone south with their loads of "green fish". In November the last mail-steamer calls, bringing not merely the last mails but the last supplies for the



"I'm afraid she's rather at the Gorkey stage."

winter. Thereafter, if you have failed to order what you want from Newfoundland—canned food, vegetables, tobacco, razor-blades, books, rum—or if you have ordered and the shop has failed to send, or the goods are lost in transit, you must do without till next June at least, when the first mail-steamer may (or may not) reach Hamilton Inlet, a little to the north of this.

When the ice begins to form round your island in the winter, you cannot at once walk to the mainland and buy tobacco from the Hudson Bay Company or get your tooth "hauled". There is an uneasy period when boats can approach your island with increasing difficulty because of the ice. Then, in December, they cannot move at all. But you cannot walk or drive your dogs to the mainland till Christmas or January.

Personally, I feel I should do that at once. But the population of Seal Islands will not be large this Christmas. Mr. S—, my fisherman with the tooth, will go back with his family to

another and (I hope) better shack in Partridge Bay for the winter. But there will be a few permanent residents, and how they live I shall not even try to imagine. There are compensations, I know. They will net seals, and shoot the White Bear, and "any game killed in December will remain good till June, being hard frozen as soon as killed". And there will be no air-raids. There is something to be said for air-raids, after all.

On the mainland, at the cosy corners at the heads of the arms and inlets, the position is less forbidding, I agree. There is a store; there may be the Grenfell or Moravian Mission, a hospital or nursing station; there are two or three dog-mails a winter. There is football on the snow, ice-boat sailing, ski-ing, and deer-hunting. March is the best month—bright, cold and bracing. "The skin gets so tanned that the whites begin to resemble Indians in colour. . . . This constant sun bath, in spite of the low temperature, has an excellent tonic effect on weakly people."

And you have laid in good supplies—piles of firewood (for you are not on the treeless islands), canned food and cured fish of every kind. There is the radio; and in "May month" perhaps the mail-boat calls again.

We should never make the mistake of supposing that what we do not like is not likeable. Neither here nor in northern Newfoundland, where winter conditions are similar, but shorter, have I heard anyone pity himself because of the long isolation of winter. Many have said that they prefer the winter. "We have fun in the winter," chuckled one grand old man. "We get round that stove and we have fun."

That is cheering—and characteristic. But I must say that if I am to be cut off anywhere for the winter, much as I love the Newfoundlander—I should prefer Ceylon.

I dreamed last night that that large iceberg we saw yesterday came sailing in before the wind and moored itself across the entrance to the Punch Bowl.

A. P. H.

Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

Children's Christmas Books

CHRISTMAS books for little children should be selected with an eye on Boxing Day, when they are a useful distraction from screaming and biliousness. There are a good many this year which will fill the bill nicely, though probably none which will qualify as those dog-eared favourites, nursery classics. Two of them, however, are new editions of very old and trusty friends: *The Misfortunes of Sophy* (WILLIAMS AND NORGATE, 5/-)—greedy *Sophy* and upright little cousin *Paul* are as adorable as ever—and ROLAND QUITTENDON'S *Giant Land*, with the original illustrations by "PUCK" (JOINER AND STEELE, 8/6). A man of genius was "Puck"—John Proctor, the children's artist, in the grand tradition of Tenniel and nineteenth-century black-and-white; look at the brio of "Giant Blackbeard Bound Hand and Foot" or "A Leap Over Giant Safesides"—Tim Pippin on his unicorn skimming lightly over the sleeping monster. After this the present fashion in illustration seems almost anæmic—but here are some charming new picture books: *William and Cherry* (Cherry is a pink cow), by MERULA SALAMAN (CRESETT PRESS, 7/6); *Harlequin* (CHATTO AND WINDUS, 6/-), with exquisite colour lithographs by CLARKE HUTTON—but NOEL STREATFEILD'S dreary text will need very determined reading aloud; *Anthony and Antimacassar* (FABER, 6/-), decorated with a fine selection of railway engines, plush sofas, pigs and station-masters in puce, yellow and sky-blue by the one and only EMETT. *Tito and Sam* (FAVIL PRESS, 4/6) is only recommended if you think your little ones would care for a story about a tortoise, a slimy snail and any number of slugs. Perhaps the less said about Miss D. E. STEVENSON'S verses *It's Nice To Be Me* (METHUEN, 6/-) the better. They are adequately represented by two lines—"I'm never 'fraid when you are there, My darling, darling Teddy Bear," and one wonders who had the nerve to suggest, on the jacket, that they were "frankly reminiscent" of R. L. S.'s immortal *Child's Garden*. Our advice about this book, to quote from it again, is "member to say 'no fanks.'" Nine- to thirteen-year-olds are well catered for this year. *Flak*, by SHIRLEY GOULDEN (W. H. ALLEN, 3/6), is the story of an Alsatian who is shot down with his master, an R.A.F. Squadron-Leader, over Holland. The heroes of *Dominic* (MULLER, 6/-) are a boy and his Exmoor pony, with a golden retriever thrown in for good measure; a satisfying book, with a gymkhana, a fire, a gang of poachers and a shipwreck. Better still is NORMAN DALE'S *Secret Service* (JOHN LANE, 6/-), for ten-year-old *Peter* goes one better than *Dominic* in running away to sea and finishing up on a destroyer in a fight to the death with a U-boat. Finally, *101 Games To Make and Play*, by A. C. HORTH (BATSFORD, 6/6), which gives workmanlike instructions for making anything from a set of chessmen to a toy theatre, will certainly help to keep them quiet . . . or will it? "Cut out rings of a suitable size from the linoleum" . . . "Excellent material can be obtained from the keyboard of an old piano." . . . Well, you have been warned.

P. M. F.

W. H. Davies

This edition of the *Collected Poems of W. H. Davies* (CAPE, 10/6) is introduced by Mr. OSBERT SITWELL, who knew Davies and was greatly attracted by his spontaneous and unsophisticated nature. Born of Welsh parents, Davies

was apprenticed to picture-frame making, but in his late teens escaped to America, where he spent some years as a tramp. Having lost a leg in an accident, he returned to England, peddled laces, pins and needles, lived in common lodging-houses and wrote verses, publishing his first book of poems at thirty-four. Bernard Shaw helped to make him known, his literary reputation was established some years before the last war, and during the rest of his life he had enough money for his needs, which remained simple, though, Mr. SITWELL tells us, he took great delight in wearing evening clothes. His death, a year or two after the outbreak of the present war, did not attract much notice, for his poetry had long been out of tune with the prevailing fashion. It rhymed; its rhythms were regular; and its subjects were nature and love, and poverty as an experience of individual men, not as a political and economic problem.

His poetry has an air of improvisation, and seems to reflect his passing moods rather than any deep and lasting emotions. When it is poignant it is because something external to himself has moved him, as in the poem on a blind child:

*I see them all: flowers of all kind,
The sheep and cattle on the leas;
The houses up the hills, the trees—
But I am dumb, for she is blind.*

The same direct response to a stimulus shows itself in:

*A mighty stretch of land like this,
Doth make me shut my eyes;
For when I look I fear to see
Its sudden fall and rise.*

In this sensibility to immediate impressions he resembles John Clare, but he lacks Clare's occasional power to summon up those distant memories which seem to have passed from time into eternity. There is nothing in Davies comparable with:

*The rabbits from the furze would squat and run;
The daisies filling every open space
And crowds of kingcups golden in the sun
Shone on the mole-hills of that happy place.*

But he was a natural singer, and when the mass of his work is forgotten, some fragments will survive in anthologies.

H. K.

Portrait of a Lost Ally

A very ill-lit corridor of history has been brilliantly illuminated by Mr. SIMON HARCOURT-SMITH'S *Alberoni* (FABER, 15/-). Here you have a cardinal, Italian by his lowly birth, Spanish by diplomatic adoption, who all but forged an eighteenth-century Anglo-Spanish alliance which would have turned the Austrians out of Italy a hundred years before Garibaldi and possibly retained for England the allegiance of America. That this alliance nearly materialized was due, on our side, to the much-maligned Bubb Doddington. That it tragically failed, and that Byng blew Alberoni's home-made fleet to bits off Cape Passero, was due to the double-dealing of Stanhope: a Pearl Harbour-ish episode which Robert Walpole stigmatized as against the laws of nations. So oddly have Germanophile historians coloured these transactions, so harshly has Alberoni suffered at the hands of tattlers like Saint-Simon, that any sincere recital of his efforts to raise his corrupt and moribund Spain to social integrity and political consequence would have the impressiveness of a successful appeal to the higher courts of history. At the same time, the material he had to deal with—notably the

gluttonous Farnese queen whom he fed into compliance and tried to harness to his state's creaking chariot—provides comedy for the least painstaking of readers.

H. P. E.

More about Ballet

That the art of ballet is founded on tradition and that it progresses by evolution and not by revolution is the main contention of Mr. ARNOLD HASKELL's new book on the Sadler's Wells Ballet. He regards the break-up of the Diaghileff Ballet after the death of its founder as an object, lesson; for an art that has become *déraciné* and whose policy is dictated—as Diaghileff's latterly was—by the whims of passing fashion or intellectual snobbery cannot long survive as a creative force. The Sadler's Wells Company has the advantages of a permanent home and a "strong directing force possessed of knowledge of the component arts (dancing, choreography, music and décor) and absolute artistic integrity"; and Mr. HASKELL gives an interesting account of the steady progress which has led it from small beginnings to its present standing as *The National Ballet* (BLACK, 10/6). In a very illuminating chapter Mr. HASKELL describes the long and painful stages by which he became a ballet-critic; and though the book is primarily addressed to the discriminating balletophil (and not to the *balletomane*) it can be read with profit by all who are interested in the development of the arts in this country.

Another new ballet-book, *Robert Helpmann* (BATSFORD, 18/-), costumed in a very attractive jacket by LESLIE HURRY, designer of the new décor for *The Swan Lake* and *Hamlet*, is intended for Robert Helpmannes. It contains a series of admirable camera-studies by RUSSELL SEDGWICK of Helpmann's three ballets—*Comus*, *The Birds* and *Hamlet*—and an account of his work both as interpreter and choreographer by Miss CARYL BRAHMS. If, however, "mass environment and the climate are responsible for . . . the plays of Shakespeare" it seems likely that the blitz was "responsible" for the brilliant ballets we ascribe to Mr. Helpmann. He should forward his fan-mail ("I want you to know how very much I have enjoyed your new ballet. As I have many times said to my husband, 'Hamlet always has been ruined by the words.'") to Reichsmarshal Goering.

D. C. B.

Towards a Highland Agriculture

In the West Highlands of to-day bread comes in a crate from Glasgow and is eaten mouldy; winter milk is tinned milk; green-stuff, save cabbage, is unknown. And this even on the temperate sea-board whose one serious foe is wind: a sea-board which has been known to grow apricots on a south wall. To this stripped and doomed land came in 1938 Dr. F. FRASER DARLING, formerly Chief Officer of the Imperial Bureau of Animal Genetics, committed, as he soundly put it, "to choosing poverty in return for the right to live as I wish." He bought a ruined herring factory, seventeen English acres and an anchorage on Tanera, an island between Skye and Cape Wrath. His reclamation of this hazardous holding is the exhilarating theme of *Island Farm* (BELL, 15/-). Seals and solans swim or waddle across his back-cloth. Shetland sheep or blue-polled cows (the latter bedded, one notes, on rushes, not concrete) monopolize the foreground: with building, ploughing, lime-burning (with peat), dredging with sea-weed—all the primitive pioneering which the last chapter erects into a policy. Such a policy needs new leaders of the same kidney as the writer, and (as he says) new laws. For "laws are made for the majority, of which the crofters are not a part."

H. P. E.

W. J. Brown

The frankness and sincerity of Mr. W. J. BROWN's "*So Far . . .*" (ALLEN AND UNWIN, 12/6), which would be remarkable in the autobiography of a private individual, are extraordinary in a politician, and are in themselves sufficient to explain his stormy career. The son of a plumber, who had to do odd jobs to keep his family, the author had a hard struggle in his early years. He loved his mother and was somewhat hostile to his father, but he pictures his father more vividly than any other person in his book, a thwarted embittered man, with undeveloped gifts of mind and character which sometimes flashed out, as in the extraordinary scene when he took his son's bullying headmaster in hand. His father's aggressiveness appears to have descended unimpaired to his son, who as a boy clerk in the Civil Service gave evidence before a Royal Commission with an intrepidity which Philip Snowden described at some length in his autobiography twenty-five years later. Before he was thirty Mr. BROWN became the general secretary of the Civil Service Clerical Association, and much of his book is devoted to his fight to secure better conditions for the rank and file of the Civil Service. As a Labour M.P. he was soon at odds with the chiefs of his Party. "Policy," he says, "is determined only by the Party caucuses, then imposed on the Parties by the Whips—using the twin weapons of bullying and bribery—and so upon the country at large." At present, as a natural result of this attitude, he belongs to a party of one, having been returned by Rugby as an independent member in 1942. His allegiance to himself is wholehearted, and it is possible that some readers may be irked when he describes himself as having "the 'panache' of a Cyrano de Bergerac, the enthusiasms of a Don Quixote." But mixed with his father's self-assertion there is a great deal of his mother's kindness and deep religious feeling. "The great issue in the world to-day," he writes, "is not an economic one but a religious one"; and elsewhere, after quoting a remark by Engels, Marx's colleague—"Consciousness is determined by environment and not environment by consciousness"—he comments "That dictum I assert to contain more error than any sentence of equal length ever written by a presumably literate man."

H. K.

Price of Admiralty

MR. WARREN ARMSTRONG, a late engineer officer of the Merchant Navy, does not mince words or opinion in his book, *Battle of the Oceans* (JARROLD, 12/6). After a tribute to the merchant seamen of this war and the last, many of whom had been allowed to "rust, alongside their idle rusting ships between 1931 and 1938," he reminds us that in the future merchant shipping must be put into good heart. He has much to say of the convoy system and the great service it has rendered to us all, gives statistics of sinkings that are terrifying to look back on, and quotes from Admiralty communiqués which make austere reading beside his own enthusiastic and rather slapdash style. He provides bitter contrasts in two of his own stories. In one he tells of a tramp limping home with a cargo of sugar after being attacked from below and above, and of the officers from the same ship watching a fashionable woman in a tea-shop being given "a little extra sugar" for her pet dog. The second story concerns the survivor of a tanker which, set on fire and badly holed, had struggled back to the oil wharves. The survivor, hitch-hiking home after a year's absence, passed a crowded car-park near a racecourse and expressed himself mildly. There is a foreword by Admiral Sir Sydney Fremantle, and many excellent illustrations.

B. E. B.

The Loanly House

By Smith Minor

PREFFICARY Note:

P This is going to be the first actual story I have ever written and, who knows, it may also be the last. As a rule, in fact always up to now, I write about things that really happen, but Green thinks it is time I had a shot at making up something out of my own head, he saying that if I am going to become a real auther I will have to sooner or later.

"Well, why not wait till later?" I said.

"Becorse later may be too late," he said. "Suppose when the time comes you find you can't?"

"I may find I can't now," I said.

"Then you'll never be a real auther," he said.

I saw what he meant, and he's generally right, but this time I didn't think he was. You see, I properly can't write a story now, I mean not a good one, you'll soon find out, but that neadn't mean

"I may not know a great deal more
When I have turned, say, forty-
four,"

why, take even Mr. Churchill, could he of done all he is doing now when he was Churchill Minor? No! Jest the

same, Green was right if he meant that I ouht to get some practise, he now saying that that was what he had meant, so after I saw that, what I had to deside was weather it wuold be fair to practise on my readers, it always seaming to me that they are very desent, and not wanting to let them down.

"I don't think it wuold be fair," I said.

"Who else can you practise on?" he said.

"I don't know," I said.

"Then how can you practise?" he said.

In the end I tossed for it, heads being I wuold and tails being I wuoldn't, and it came down heads I wuold, so I am.

End of Prefficary Note.

The Loanly House.

By Smith Minor.

Snow was falling! The snowflakes came down like thousands of tiny bits of white paper, nay, perhaps millions, who could say, but certainly the man who came along the road from Livechester was in no mood to count them, he thinking only of the old home he was going back to after 23½ years, yet

well remembering even after all that time that it should be the next turning on the left.

He thort of the far-off days that were gone, like one dose. Then the house had wrung with the laufhter of many poeple, including a father, a mother, 5 brothers, 2 sisters (one pretty, one not), and 6 servants of varyous kinds, for we must tell the surprised reader that in those times you could get as many servants as you could pay for, they being as plentiful as whasps.

But now, ah! how diferent the house wuold be! They were all (1) dead, (2) married, or (3) gone in some other way, and he knew this by the letter he had recieved in Australia from Messrs. Steadglass and Wipplewead wich informed him that the house was now his. It was this letter that had brought him hieing back.

Note. If there is a real firm of solicitors named Steadglass and Wipplewead, this is not them, but a diferent Steadglass and Wipplewead. Shuold, however, a real Steadglass and Wipplewead sufer in any way throuh being thort to be these, then the auther offers this publick appology, in the hope it will do instead of Dammages, wich even if he could pay them, he could only pay very slowly. End of note.*

Let us now continue with the strange adventure of our hero, who we have left a little way before the turning to his old home.

The reader will remember us having said that he thort it was the next turning on the left, but before reeching it he came to a turning on the right that seamed somehow to be it, yet how could it be? A sudden confushion siezed him.

"This is passing strange," he thort. "Wuold but there was someone to ask!"

Scarse had he thort this thort when, lo! a dimn figgure loomed up before him. But dimn thouh he was, our hero could see that he had dark glasses, a scar, a wooden leg, and a bulging brown bag.

"Excuse me," said our hero, "but could you tell me the way to Hope House?"

The man with the dark glasses, etc, dropped his bag, but quickly picked it up again.

"Hope House?" he said. "A fitter name for it wuold be No Hope House."

* It was Green who thort I ouht to put this in. Auther.



"267381 ACW2 Jones M., may I call you by your first three numbers?"



"I believe Dad wants a Scout's knife this Christmas."

"Why?" said the other.

"Becorse no one ever goes there but ghoasts," said the other other.

Our hero gave a fearless laufh.

"Ghoasts!" he scoughed. "As if ghoasts frighten me! So wich is the way?"

"Along this turning," said the man with the dark glasses, etc.

"I thort the house was on the other side," said the other.

"Perhaps it was," said the other other.

Now this was rather a quierous thing to say, and as our hero turned into the turning he wondered weather the ghoasts, if any, were the ghoasts of Movers, and if they had moved the house from one side to the other!

But soon he began thinking about another quierous thing. The man with the dark glasses etc. had said no one went to Hope House but ghoasts, and do ghoasts leave footprints? Yet, see! Along the white lane, wich as the light faded grew dimmer and dimmer, were two lines of footprints, one line coming, the other going, and so again he thort, "This is passing strange!"

There was some mistery here! Nay,

three (so far). (1) A house on the wrong side of a road. (2) A man with dark glasses, a scar, a wooden leg, and a buljing brown bag that he dropped when asked a simple question. (3) Footprints in a snowy lane trod but by ghoasts.

"One thing is certin," said our hero, speaking alowd like some poeple do, and as he had got the habit of in Australia when so often alone with nothing but thousands of sheep, "these cannot be the footprints of that man I met, becorse they are all boots, and a man with a wooden stump wuold make half of them holes."

Wondering what he wuold find when he reeched the house, he continued on his way, and suddenly, lo! there it was before him, but, ah! how diferent to what it had been 23½ years ago! Then it had been full of sixteen poeple, encluding himself, whose voices and laufhter had made the ivy-covered walls wring from morn till night, but now it was silent, deserted, and loanly. Cuold it be the same place?

Yet it was.

To his surprise the footprints went throuh the gate and right into the

grounds. Who was this misterious visiter who, it seamed, had both been and gone! As he asked the question something darted towards him out of the glowming. Had he not staped brisquely aside it wuold have hit him. It was a small monkey!

"A monkey here?" he thort. "How comes that?"

But the monkey cuold not have been the misterious visiter, for do monkeys wear boots?

The next thing that hapened was half-way to the house. He nearly tripped over a little mownd of snow. Something was under the mownd. Digging the snow away, he found a top hat!

Glad that it was only a top hat, and not a full-leangth man standing under it, he reeched at last the house. Another dimn figgure stood jest outside the pore, the footprints leading right up to it. And now, for the first time, our hero felt *un soopcon* funny, who wuoldn't and clenched his fist ready to strike if attacked. But the figgure did not move. It was a snow-man with three eyes and two noses!

By this time our hero desided he had

had enough, and he turned round and walked back to Livechester.

It was by a bit of good luck that the world-famous detective Snetherton happened to be at the police stashun, and after he had told him his story the detective thort hard for a bit and then said,

"Has anything been stolen from the house?"

"I don't know, I didn't go in," said our hero, "but if I had gone in I euoldn't of said, not knowing after 23½ years what was there."

Now the world-famous detective paced the room for several minits, and then he stoped and said,

"I have worked out the solushun, and I will now go over all the points. Why did the man you met drop his bag? Becorse you gave him a shock. Why did he say Hope House was haunted and no one ever went there? Becorse he wanted to keap you from going there. They were his footprints. Thoun he had a wooden leg he caried an extra boot in his bag wich he prest over each hole made by his stump. It was also his monkey, he being an ex-organ-grinder. He made the snow-man to frighten poeple away. And he stole the Family Hairloom, i.e., the Golden Cup won by your great-grandfather at Eaton Sports in 1842."

Our hero almost rhealed in surprise.

"How do you know all this?" he said.

"Quite simple," said the world-famous detective. "We have cought the man and the cup and extra boot were in his bag."

But two misteries still remaned.

"How did the house come to be on the other side when I thort it was on the other?" said our hero.

"Wich way did you think you were walking?" said Snetherton.

"South," said our hero.

"The snow confused you, you were walking north," said Snetherton.

"Oh, I see," said our hero. "But what about the top hat under the snow?"

A frown past over Snetherton's good-looking feachures.

"That I do not know," he said, "but one day I will find out!"

End of story.

Note. If it isn't good, I'm sorry, but don't forget, it's only practise. End of note.

Interesting Events

"GENTLEMEN," said Homer, rising to his feet, "we are singularly fortunate to-night to have with us one who is a scholar and a gentleman—a man who has earned great distinction in his profession by his fearless independence of thought and action, by his sterling sense of loyalty and by his breadth of vision. Gentlemen, it is my pleasure to introduce that pioneer among pedagogues, that devotee of discipline" (Homer has a soft spot for "Itma"), "that erudite Englishman—our colleague Francis Pringle-Watt."

After nearly two years of bridge and back-chat the staff of St. Morbid's had decided to relieve the tedium of their national service by forming a Firewatchers' Scientific Society. This was its inaugural meeting.

Pringle-Watt then read his paper, "The Geometry of a Declining Birth-

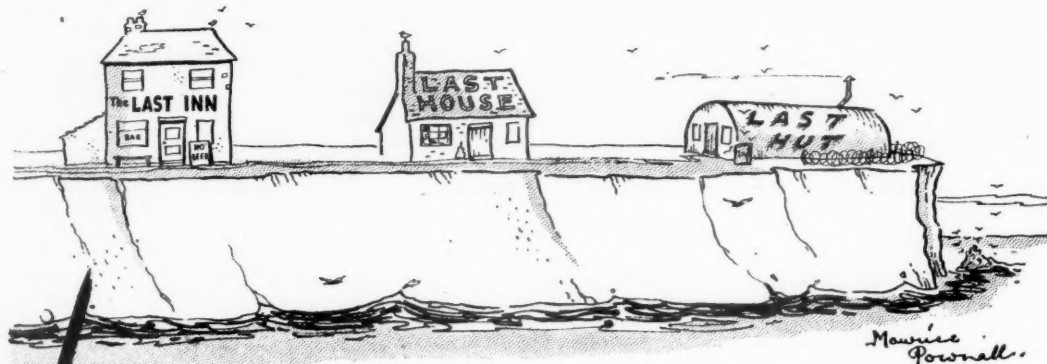
Rate." The following extracts will show that his address was as constructive as it was analytical.

"Before the war the middle classes chose cars rather than babies. It takes about £80 to run a car for a year and it takes about £80 to rear two infants for the same period. It should, therefore, be the Government's first task of reconstruction to provide cars with lower running costs (say £40 per annum)."

"Competition can be more than the life-blood of commerce—it can become the mainspring of an increasing birth-rate. If the production of twins and triplets (to say nothing of further values in the same series) were rewarded adequately the market would become much more lively. I suggest £2,000 for twins, £3,000 for triplets and £10,000 for the 'double'."

"The lowest birth-rates appear among the black-coated and, I regret to say, the black-gowned workers. Here, if one were needed, is a further proof of the urgent need for dress-reform."

During the discussion that followed Charteris took the view that the dearth of births had been grossly exaggerated, and challenged Pringle-Watt to prove his theories. This P.-W. was about to do (by comparing the total number of brothers and sisters of those present with the total number of their uncles and the total number of their great-uncles) when the sirens began to wail. There was time only to draft a resolution stressing the concern of the masters of St. Morbid's at the alarming decline of our child population and to announce the date of the next meeting, when Cartwright would read a paper entitled "A Plea for Smaller Classes."



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WILL OF THE PEOPLE

"The will of our soldiers assures an unconditional surrender . . .

The will of our people can assure a just and durable peace . . .

To-day the United Nations are joined in their determination to win a decisive victory . . .

To-morrow millions of soldiers and workers can have steady employment if they also unite with determination to bring about 'a just and durable peace.'

People here, in common with people of other lands, can prosper materially and spiritually after the war ends—but only if now the peoples of the United Nations make loud their demands for 'a just and durable peace.'"

★ ★ ★

The above is an extract from a statement which has been issued by the International Nickel Company of Canada, and is widely published in Canada and the U.S.A. We reproduce the extract here because we believe that all engaged in industry in Britain will approve its principles, and desire to collaborate with all the United Nations in formulating plans for "a just and durable peace."

Published by

THE MOND NICKEL COMPANY LTD



SUPPER . . . without the Siren?

Remember 1936? Threepence on Income Tax. Three monarchs in one year. Three years to go before the first Siren. Three years of Plenty . . . with all the Batchelor's English Canned Fruits and Vegetables you wanted. Then September 3, 1939 and the tramp of marching men; of warriors who must be fed with the best a Nation can provide. This meant sacrifice for those at home. Among the best a Nation can provide are Batchelor's Fruits and Vegetables. With Victory round the corner, we are looking to the day when you can cram into your shopping-bag all the "Batchelor's" you can carry.

Batchelor's

English Canned FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

SCARCE BECAUSE THE FORCES MUST COME FIRST!



but when it comes to shaving—these are my aims . . .

Rapid service—with no brush or water to take up time.

Smooth action—because all whisker-resistance has been thoroughly overcome.

Comfort—when I've shaved I rub in the Sport cream that's left; it soothes the skin and protects it against sun and wind.

Mark my words, shaving's always a highly successful operation if you trust your chin to—

Sport BRUSHLESS SHAVING CREAM
for speed and comfort
IN TUBES AND JARS

SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST

Whether of man or machine, good reputation is founded upon dependability in service. Certainly in all things mechanical, the safe rule is to buy only the reputable product.



The Ferranti Electric Fire has established itself upon its serviceability over long periods of use. For this reason, owners of Ferranti models, bought 5 to 10 years ago, will still enjoy efficient heating this Winter. It is a point worth remembering when electric fires are again available.

FERRANTI
Radiant Electric Fires
FIRST • FOREMOST • HOTTEST

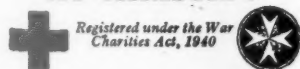
Ferranti Ltd., Moston, Manchester, 10.

London Office: Kern House, Kingsway, W.C.2. FF291

Hidden Treasures

Stored away in "safety" there are countless Jewels, unworn, unseen. AND we have living men for whom necessities are urgently wanted . . . Prisoners of War, Sick and Wounded. A hidden treasure taken out of store and sent to the Treasurer, Red Cross Sales, 15 Old Bond Street, London, W.1, would help to meet that growing need through the Duke of Gloucester's Red Cross and St. John Fund. Send for the next

RED CROSS Jewel Sale AT CHRISTIE'S



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Beechams Pills Limited

EPHEDROL

RELIEVES COLDS
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A "sniff" at bedtime
clears the nasal passages

Chemists, 1/6 & 2/6 (including
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CLAY & ABRAHAM LTD.
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By Appointment

Holders of Royal
Appointment to
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EDINBURGH. Est. 1793

PROGRESS IN PLASTICS

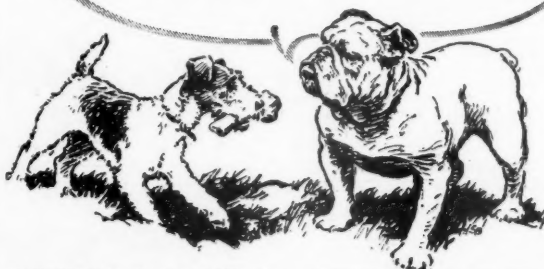
At the present time Plastics are playing a greater part in the war production than most people imagine. Immense strides have been made, and peace-time will see it applied for uses far beyond the dreams of its earliest pioneers.

If you are planning for the future let us discuss with you now how it can be applied to your business.

SOUPLEX

SOUPLEX LTD., MORECAMBE, LANCs

Hi! old boy...
**SAVE THAT BONE FOR
SALVAGE ... don't bury it!**



"What? This old bone? It's all gnawed to bits." "That doesn't matter. Master says, to shorten the war we've got to salvage every scrap of bone we can. He says bones help make Glue for Aircraft construction . . . and Glycerine for Explosives . . . and Bone-Flour to feed farm animals . . . oh yes! and Fertiliser to help him grow Victory Vegetables." "Gosh! I'll dig up all my old bones for salvage straight away." Bones — even gnawed ones — are vital to our war effort. If every

family salvages only one bone weekly we shall free thousands of tons of shipping space for other essential needs. Save every scrap, even the smallest bones, and put out regularly for collection.

Remember — Game poultry and rabbit bones — though dangerous for dogs — are valuable salvage. Save them, too — besides all beef and mutton bones.

This advertisement is contributed in the National Interest
by the makers of **CHAPPIE DOG FOOD**

* ARISTILE
(Lisle)

* RAYSTOC
(Rayon)

* UTILITY
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Supplies are limited. Fair
shares are distributed to all
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* AS GOOD AS WARTIME STOCKINGS CAN BE



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FUEL SOAP LABOUR

You need less soap and fuel, your work is easier if you add a few drops of Scrubb's to the water when washing clothes, washing up, and washing floors, etc.

Every Cleaning
need in one bottle
of

SCRUBB'S
CLOUDY AMMONIA

PER 1/6 BOTTLE

WARDONIA
BLADES

FOR BETTER SHAVES.
SOLD BY NAAFI.

Creamy. Delicious. Nourishing

**ROYAL
ARROWROOT
DESSERT**

EASILY MADE EASILY
DIGESTED. SERVED
HOT OR COLD

4 1/2 EACH
PER PINTY
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PRODUCT OF STANDARD BRANDS LTD.

MECCANO

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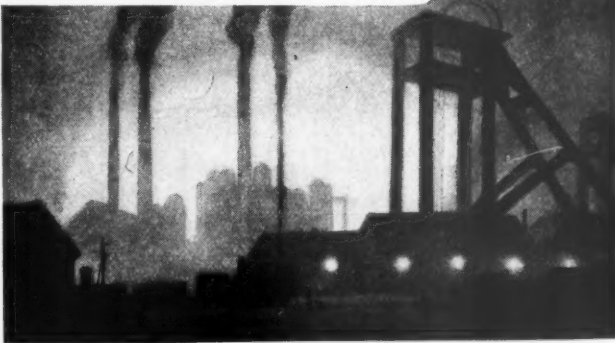
HORNBY TRAINS

*The World's
Greatest Toys*

We regret that we cannot supply these famous toys today, but they will be ready for you again after the war. In the meantime, if you are in any difficulties with your toys, write to

MECCANO LIMITED, BINNS ROAD, LIVERPOOL 13

THE ATTACK GOES ON



Atmospheric conditions constitute a constant attack against Iron and Steel. Galvanizing provides resistance against these attacks. The strength of such resistance is determined by the quality of the Zinc coating and the method of its application.



The last word in Galvanizing, provides the strongest possible defence against Corrosion.

BRITISH ROPES LIMITED

MANUFACTURERS OF WIRE

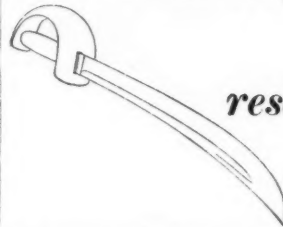


WIRE ROPES & HEMP CORDAGE

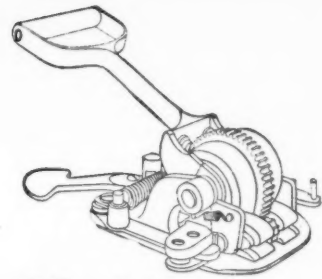
HEAD OFFICE: DONCASTER • OFFICES AND WORKS THROUGHOUT GREAT BRITAIN

How does a

Wire Banding Machine



resemble a Cutlass?



A century ago Webleys made ships' cutlasses (among other weapons) and made them very well. Since then, while the tradition of fine workmanship has been retained, Webleys have developed into an engineering organisation serving a variety of industries. Shown above is a Wire Banding Machine produced by Webleys. Another instance, this, of how Webleys' experience in small-arms manufacture is now applied to fine limit work of many kinds.

Webley

PRECISION ENGINEERS SINCE 1790

WEBLEY AND SCOTT LIMITED, PREMIER WORKS, WEAMAN STREET, BIRMINGHAM, 4

Business feet



A corn, callous, painful heel or weak arch puts a brake on business activity as surely as war restrictions!

If your feet give the slightest trouble—come to Scholl Foot Service. First our experts give you treatment for immediate pain. Then, by careful examination, discover why your feet have gone 'out of the true,' and suggest methods for correction. Soon you're walking normally—with feet that mean business! Advice free. Treatment inexpensive.

Scholl Foot Aids and Appliances for men, women and children are obtainable at Scholl Depots, all the best chemists, shoe-dealers and stores.

FOOTNOTES BY SCHOLL

DIFFERENT DESTINATIONS



—same shirt

Your destination may be secret, but your shirts are well-known—'Viyella' Service Shirts. Their smooth, healthy texture and roomy fit make them comfortable in every climate. Cool when it's hot, warm when it's not. And they wash and wear as only good shirts can. For H.M. Forces only. In regulation colours—white, khaki and Air Force blue.



'Viyella'
REGD.
SERVICE SHIRTS

**"...such stuff as dreams
are made on"**

The dreams are his. Their realisation is in some measure our responsibility—all of us. Will he own an M.G.? We must see that it is even faster and safer than before. Will he seek a job in one of the engineering industries? We must give him help and encouragement.



—made by NUFFIELD